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"Portrait preségné de l'architecte Woronikhine et de sa famille" by Anthonio-François Lagrenée (1774-1832), which will be shown in the exhibition *French Paintings from 1800 to 1850* at Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, 88 Bury Street, St James's, London SW1 from March 15.

High tide for the Left

Peter Clarke

KENNETH O. MORGAN
Labour in Power 1945-1951
546pp. Oxford University Press. £15.
0192158651

The left in Britain is notoriously bad at getting its act together. Indeed it does not seem able to manage it more than once every forty years. In 1868 the formation of the Liberal Party was sealed with Gladstone's election victory and accession to the premiership. In 1906 a combination between organized Liberalism and Labour laid the electoral foundations of the Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith administrations. In 1945 the Labour Party achieved power in its own right under Attlee - the mountain brought forth a mouse - and began its historic period in office. Two questions arise. One is speculative and political: who knows what may be round the next corner? The other is dispassionate and historical: what exactly happened? There is no shortage of answers to the first from an eager bevy of volunteer pundits, but it takes a well-prepared pioneer to grapple seriously with the second.

The challenge is obvious. The trite claim that an election - any election will do - is "the most important since 1945" is a measure of how the date has established itself in folk memory. The character of the Labour Party at its high tide has been the subject of widely differing claims and much rhetorical myth-making. Attlee himself has, most improbably, become almost a cult-figure; and the agency of his government in shaping post-war Britain is universally acknowledged, whether in celebration or reproach. At home, full employment policies, the large public sector, the welfare state; overseas, the Atlantic alliance, the end of Empire, the maintenance of Great Power pretensions - these became the political landmarks for the next thirty years.

The inauguration of this era, with the wartime triumph of the "Attlee consensus", has been the subject of a distinguished book by Paul Addison. Major biographical studies of Attlee, Bevin, Morrison, Lord Addison, Bevan and Gaiskell are now before us, and Dalton is shortly to join them. Of the major ministers, only Cripps and - with more reason - Wilson remain without a scholarly tombstone. There are definitive studies of particular policies: Chester on nationalization, Gowing on atomic energy, to name only the most

monumental. What Kenneth Morgan has done - stealing a march upon that "titan amongst labour historians", as he gracefully terms Henry Pelling - is to pull all the available materials together for the first time in a comprehensive and well-documented account of the Attlee Government as a whole.

The organization of *Labour in Power 1945-1951* has evidently not been easy. After an initial chapter, inevitably entitled "The long march to 1945", there is a broad-ranging analysis of both the structure of the Labour movement and the institutional framework of government. Four solid chapters follow, each surveying a different field of policy, from nationalization and the welfare state to the Commonwealth and foreign affairs. The departmental archives have been purposefully ransacked in penetrating the corridors of power, as bold rhetorical ends were confronted by drab administrative means. There are no great surprises here. Instead we have a sober corroboration of earlier, more poetic, accounts. For example, when Emanuel Shinwell was put in charge of nationalizing coal, it was claimed that the only guidance Transport House could offer him was a pamphlet by James Griffiths, written in Welsh. Essentially, Morgan does not challenge this, and it consorts with his innate Welsh sense of fair play to interpolate that "Griffiths' pamphlet, *Glo* (Coal), was an excellent one".

After this hard slog through the thickets of policy, we draw breath with a chapter which more spaciouly seeks to evoke the post-war mood, looking at changes in social structure and cultural outlook. This marks a transition from a basically analytical to a broadly chronological approach. The four remaining chapters thus take the story from the crises of 1947, through the Cripps era, beyond the General Election of February 1950, which gave the government a further eighteen months in office as a rather sorry appendix to its first term. The importance of the caesura in 1947 is manifest. It would hardly be too much to claim that up to 1947 the Government was concerned with working out the logic of the post-war settlement, at home and abroad, and fulfilling its own historic commitments; whereas after 1947 it was either at the mercy of events or struggling without respite in an effort to master them. In 1945 Labour sensed that it had a rendezvous with destiny; in 1947 it became aware that history is one damn thing after another. The process can be seen as a betrayal of ideals or an education in political realism: a tragic necessity or sheer bad luck.

When Labour came to power it did so as the beneficiary and guardian of the war-time consensus. Its rise to power as a national party, able to mobilize broad-based popular support, was bound up with the developments of the war years. Fair shares and comradeship helped universalize the Labour ethic beyond the sectional boundaries of trade-union solidarity. In its best pre-war elections (1929 and 1935) Labour had harvested about eight million votes and was penned in to a share of the poll well under 40 per cent. This may look good in comparison with 1918 - or 1983 for that matter - but it was clearly not enough to sustain a government under a two-party dispensation. At the outbreak of war there was scant sign of progress, but by 1945 Labour was able to poll twelve million, manifesting a qualitative change in its appeal. Moreover, its rise did not stop there. The by-election record of the Attlee Government is unique in that it did not lose a single seat which Labour had held in 1945. Admittedly, this achievement was protected by luck. It was fortuitous that some of Labour's worst performances came in elections where the safety margin was ample. Even so, Labour was still moving forward in 1951, when, with a high turnout, its share of the poll exceeded that of 1945. At virtually fourteen million, its vote was the highest ever recorded by a British political party, and it took the genius of our electoral system to give the Tories, who had come a creditable second, a majority in Parliament.

Electoral, then, Labour stood firmly on a peak in the years 1945-51. It had been a long march up, and, as with the Grand Old Duke of York, that proved to be only half the story. Ideologically, too, Labour's strength and unity was a historical peculiarity. "Throughout its eighty-odd years", Morgan writes, "the Labour Party has been plagued by the rival tensions of grass-roots pressure for a socialist society and the alternative demands of the realities of power." Yet the picture is surely more complicated than this. It is not clear how the Labour Party can be conceived as the instrument, whether sharp or blunt, of something simply known as socialism, when most arguments within the party have been attempts to appropriate the term for rival viewpoints and strategies. At any rate, in the 1940s a number of impulses could be reconciled. To go no further, the Labourist emphasis upon incremental gains (usually associated with trade unionism), the social democratic priority for welfare legislation (often inherited from Liber-

alism), and the socialist insistence on the necessity of public ownership (whether on Fabian or Marxist lines) all found a place on a common agenda.

So widespread was the acceptance of this agenda in 1945 that it overflowed the strict bounds of party. Most Liberals accepted most of it and some Conservatives accepted some of it, as the forward commitments of the Coalition Government make clear. But Morgan is surely right to insist that consensus has a limited value as an explanation of the measures of the Attlee Government. True, the Conservatives were ready to acquiesce in limited extensions of public ownership, especially when it meant the taxpayer bailing out the owners of unprofitable stock, but their partisanship clearly emerged in opposition over road haulage and, above all, steel. Again, the principle of National Insurance was uncontested, and the social security aspect of the welfare state thus derived directly from the Beveridge Report. Implementation at a particular level of benefits, given post-war economic constraints, was another matter and depended on Labour's own political priorities.

Moreover, the National Health Service, the other pillar of the welfare state, involved a sharp break with consensus. Sir Henry Wilkins, as Churchill's Minister of Health, had shown personal goodwill in trying to square the circle here, but it was left to Aneurin Bevan to determine the principles of the scheme, notably nationalization of the hospitals, notwithstanding the organized opposition of the doctors. Bevan not only gave them stick, he also offered a glimpse of carrot, since his scheme, like Lloyd George's before it, meant a net increase in medical finance which, in the nature of things in a labour-intensive sector, was bound to find its way into the pockets of ordinary general practitioners. This is a story which Morgan relishes: "It was Bevan's, perhaps Britain's, finest hour."

It also has to be admitted that the finest hour was bought on tick. The welfare state was built on the proceeds of the American loan, negotiated by Keynes at the end of 1945, and including an obligation to make the pound sterling convertible. This inescapable provision - American willingness to advance the money clearly depended upon it - was a time-bomb which exploded in the summer of 1947. Convertibility may not have been solely responsible for the nerve-shattering financial crisis, but it certainly exacerbated it. Dalton was shaken at the Treasury, his confident advocacy of

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cheap money undermined. Attlee shivered into supine immobility. Coming only months after the fuel crisis, which had brought the country to a standstill, it suggested that the Government might be losing its grip. Admittedly, the fuel crisis could be dismissed as an act of God, since this happened to be the worst winter of the century, but even so, such a loss of providential sanction was unsettling. What the sterling crisis had done was to expose the Government's nakedness. Its rhetoric of planning was not matched by a commensurate ability to control the economy. Its response was not dirigiste but "deary me".

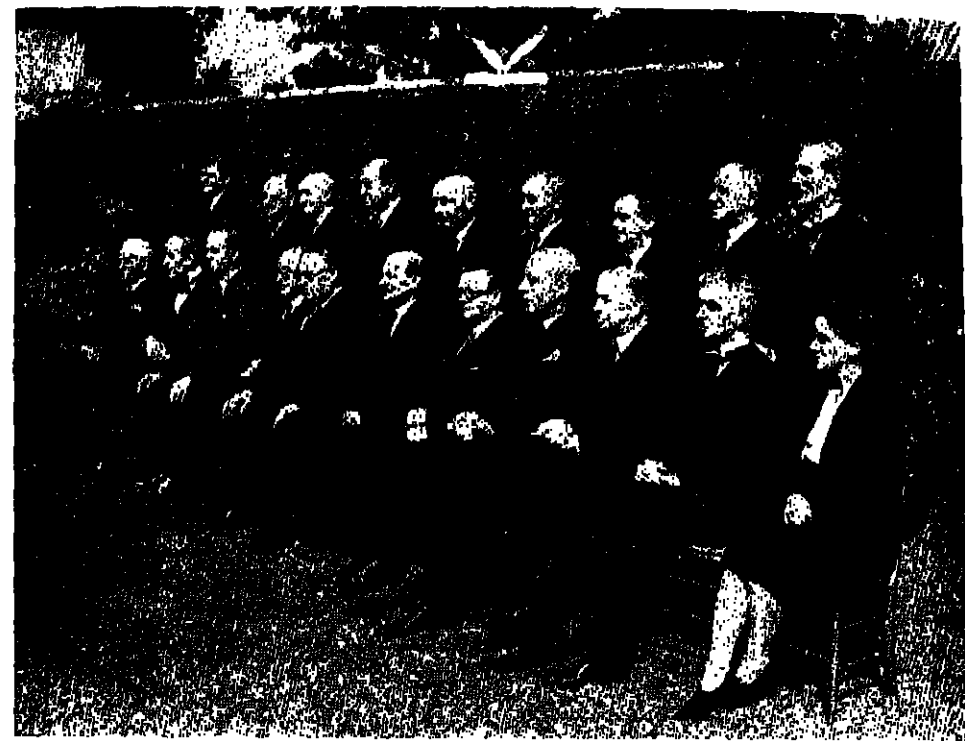
In one sense the Government never recovered. Its pristine image was tarnished, its honeymoon period clearly ended. Yet in other ways its underlying resilience was impressive. Attlee fought off the attempt to replace him, as proposed by Cripps, by himself promoting Cripps, whose reputation had been enhanced by his display of resolution; and when Dalton shortly had to resign as Chancellor, Cripps stood as his anointed successor. Cripps was like other men in that he favoured short skirts for women, but unlike them in that his reason was the saving in textile supplies. This was a sort of asceticism that stood in obvious contrast to Bevin's proletarian appetite for the good things of life, for Cripps perfectly exemplified the priggish face of middle-class progressivism. With a single-minded zeal for public ends amply sustained by a private means, he was fittingly succeeded in his Bristol South-East constituency by Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

It was Cripps's austerity policies between 1947 and 1950 which re-established the Government's authority. This can be seen as the real beginning of Keynesian economic management, a path later followed faithfully by Gaiskell at the Treasury. The main object was a shift of resources into exports as efforts were concentrated upon closing the dollar gap. It was the new generation of Keynesian ministers – notably Gaiskell, Strachey, Jay and Wilson – who master-minded the devaluation policy in the summer of 1949, while Cripps sought to regain his health in a Swiss sanatorium. How remarkable it now seems that these plans could be laid weeks ahead without any breach of strict confidentiality! Morgan's account stresses that this was a proposal for "a really massive change"; unfortunately he exaggerates this – a rare slip in a long book – by three times stating that the new rate was \$2.40, a level only reached in 1967. The 1949 devaluation, of course, was from \$4.03 to \$2.80. It was more than enough to bring about a sharp beneficial change in the balance of payments, and by 1950 there were heartening signs of progress all round. Morgan goes so far as to salute Cripps

as "the real architect of the rapidly improving economic picture and growing affluence from 1952 onwards".

In foreign affairs, too, the Government drew a second wind in 1947. There had been much talk of a socialist foreign policy in 1945, and Bevin's remark about "left speaking to left" has often been taken in this sense, as it is by Morgan. In fact, Bevin's reference was to France, not the Soviet Union, of which he already held a well-nourished suspicion. Contrary to some conspiracy theories on the left, it did not need right-wing Foreign Office mandarins to bamboozle Bevin about Russia; and Russia's conduct did precious little to debamboozle him. The illusions of post-war cooperation between all the Great Powers withered with the onset of the Cold War. Bevin was an old-fashioned nationalist in many ways – true to his class once more – but his achievement in winning Labour support for his foreign policy has a wider significance. It is not just that he made the *Daily Herald* into the paper that supported our boys, he also won the assent of the left for the Atlantic alliance. Moreover he did much to make "Western Union" a constructive force, especially by parlaying American sentiment into hard cash by means of Marshall Aid. He summoned the New World into action to redress the bank balance of the Old, and for a second time the welfare state was underwritten by Uncle Sam.

The personal stock of most major ministers holds up pretty well in this reckoning, with the overall judgment that it was a gifted administration. Morgan tries to find a good word for everyone, but he has to try harder with some than with others. Attlee himself does not come out particularly well: if he seemed a rather drab little man, we are led to suppose, this may not have been a paradox but a true likeness. The great exception is India, where his decisiveness is given its due as "a great triumph of statesmanship". With Bevin, too, myth-making is sternly resisted, while the magnitude of his achievements in his prime is acknowledged. Nor is Dalton one of the author's favourites, being depicted here as bombastic and prejudiced. Morrison, by contrast, often appears in an unexpectedly good light, on account of his grasp of business and managerial skills – certainly no mere Tammany Hall hack. Cripps, too, commands respect for his drive and integrity. There is one dark horse in these stakes – Creech Jones, whose record as Colonial Secretary is rescued from oblivion and the damning condescension of Attlee. But the most vividly drawn personalities, not surprisingly in view of later events, which cast their shadow backwards, are those of Bevin and Gaiskell. Morgan's judgments here burn with



Members of the Cabinet photographed in the garden at 10 Downing Street in August 1945. Front row (left to right) Lord Addison, Lord Jovell, Sir Stafford Cripps, Arthur Greenwood, Herbert Morrison, Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Hugh Dalton, A. V. Alexander, J. Chuter Ede, Ellen Wilkinson. Back row (left to right) Aneurin Bevan, George Isaacs, Lord Sainsgate, George Hall, Lord Peitch-Lawrence, Jack Lawson, Joseph Westwood, Emanuel Shillwell, Tom Williams.

a latent passion rarely disclosed elsewhere, and there are no surprises in how he rates them.

During the Government's second term of office, from February 1950 to October 1951, Bevan and Gaiskell emerged as the crucial figures in a new polarization of the Labour party. The old gang were on the way out – Cripps and Bevin dying, Dalton and Morrison in decline, Attlee grimly surviving them all. A prime minister who promoted Gaiskell to the Treasury in October 1950 had kept his eye for talent; but one who simultaneously left Bevan in relatively minor office had lost his nose for trouble. Within months, a clash of high principle, fuelled by personal ambition, brought the Government to its knees. Gaiskell championed a major rearmament programme which proved beyond Britain's capacity to meet. Bevan elevated some minor proposals for changes within his National Health Service into a resigning issue. The Government tottered and party unity was permanently fractured.

Morgan senses the disproportionate elements in this crisis, and deplores it as needless, but is in no doubt as to where blame lies, arguing that "the entire affair reflects on Gaiskell's relative political inexperience as a senior minister, and his doctrinaire stubbornness, a trait he was to show again in the controversy

over Clause Four after the 1959 election". From the point of view of a Labour loyalist, this judgment has much to commend it, acknowledging the primacy of what has come to be known as fudging and muddling. As for Bevan, the claim is firmly pressed that his resignation stemmed naturally from a consistent critique of the rearmament programme – a view challenged by more of the sources than an unwary reading of these pages might suggest. This is, if not the Bevanite interpretation of history, at least an interpretation which will gladden the hearts of many old Bevanites, with the possible exception of Lord Wilson, whose own role is necessarily diminished in consequence.

It all shows how difficult it is to escape the coils of these controversies, even thirty years on, and even guided by as scrupulous a historian as Kenneth Morgan. With this book he consolidates his reputation as the most productive and formidable historian currently writing on twentieth-century British politics. It will be seized upon eagerly by a throng of readers, in the universities and elsewhere, many of them unborn in the years with which it deals, who will find that the period has a real history, and now a real historiography. A final cheer for the publishers for producing a substantial, well-printed volume at such a reasonable price.

the ecstatic – to the Stalin-Tito split. Another is Bevin's determination to recognize the communist government in China and to accept it into international society. A third is the British response to Continental moves towards economic integration. Here there was a glaring contrast between private alarm and irritation and an outer determination to be polite and welcoming towards countries while the British were encouraging to build up their defences.

During this period the British gradually shifted their main overseas defence commitment from the Middle East to Western Europe. They were deeply disappointed by the Dominions' refusal to consider seriously a Commonwealth defence policy, a refusal made more bitter by the fact that the Dominions did not dissent from the British Government's political analysis of international relations. They kept alive the semblance of Anglo-American wartime military cooperation from 1945 to 1948. An almost meaningless charade at that time if only because of Britain's total exclusion from American atomic strategy, this looked as though it would lead to real joint endeavours with the successful negotiations for the Atlantic pact. In practice, Britain accepted an extremely unequal military partnership with Washington in which the Cabinet specifically rejected making the stationing of American nuclear bombers on British soil conditional on promises about the circumstances in which bombs would be dropped. Ministers argued

constantly about the levels of defence spending and military manpower. Finally, the Korean War caused them to throw caution to the winds in regard to restraining the growth of the defence budget, while at the same time questioning their virtually automatic endorsement of American strategic policy.

There are some criticisms to be set against the overall excellence of this book. First, Bevin's early efforts to revive the Anglo-Soviet relationship and his attitude towards the idea of a west European group of states under British leadership as an alternative to the uncertain (before 1948) prospect of Atlantic unity receive distinctly short shrift. Bevin appears in these pages as a consistent cold warrior, which he was not, though Miss Barker makes clear his conviction that hostilities could be kept cold, and his positive horror at American talk of rolling back communism. Second, perhaps influenced by the characteristically bland tone of the Cabinet documents which provide her main source, she does not entirely succeed in evoking the anguished and occasionally hysterical British response to what an important memorandum in 1948 called "The Threat to Western Civilisation" from the Soviet Union. Third, it is regrettable that the narrative stops abruptly in December 1950 instead of continuing for the ten months to Labour's electoral downfall. Among other things, the account of the Government's part in the Korean War crisis is left suspended in mid-air.

The cap that fits

Roy Porter

BARBARA EVANS

Freedom to Choose: The Life and Work of Dr Helena Wright, pioneer of contraception 286pp. Bantley Head. £12.95. 0370.305043

All women who have ever got anything done in this country have been termites: think of Boudicca, Florence Nightingale, and Marie Stopes. Helena Wright was no exception. "She never seemed to think that she might not be right", judged Joan Rettie; and practically all who crossed her path found her autocratic and opinionated, though possessed of a winning blend of charm and conviction. Perhaps as a result of her medical background, Helena Wright believed there was a correct answer to every problem and that she had it. All who disagreed were knaves and fools, ripe for steamrolling into submission. Dr Wright wanted her own way, and she got it, through most of the ninety-four years of her life.

In the main we would agree she was in the right. For she devoted something like half a

century to campaigning for contraception. Arriving home in 1926 after a spell of five years' service as a medical missionary in China, she became appalled at how women's health and marital harmony were jeopardized by endless unwanted pregnancies. She dedicated herself to changing all that. Finding the medical hierarchy at best apathetic and at worst obstructionist, finding the Churches – particularly the Roman Catholic – bigoted and vituperative, and politicians terrified of grasping the nettle, Helena Wright and her colleagues went it alone. Working alongside Marie Stopes, Margaret Pyke, Mary Stocks and others in clinics they had themselves set up, they dispensed information (to the married and the engaged: that was as far as they dared go), and above all fitted thousands upon thousands of contraceptive caps. Paralleling Stopes's success with *Married Love*, Helena Wright also produced best-selling manuals such as *Birth Control* and *The Sex Factor in Marriage*, the latter urging the cardinal importance of sexual gratification aside from procreation to secure "enduring passion".

Helena Wright was not a researcher like Kinsey. Though devoted to working women

she was no socialist. Nor did she care much for the political aspirations of the suffragettes, just as later she was slow to grasp the importance of world population policy. Rather, her abiding goal, as Barbara Evans justly brings out, was that individual women be freed from the curse of being unwilling baby-factories. Her politics were a latter-day nonconformity: "Give women the choice and they will choose. I want to see every individual on earth having that choice and having it free."

It is one of the virtues of Evans's fluent biography, which draws on conversations with her subject late in life and on free access to family papers, that she sees both the strengths and weaknesses of Helena Wright's bulldozing personality. Though preaching the gospel tirelessly, she never fully thought through its social implications or came to terms with her own contradictions and prejudices. Thus she could be genuinely radical and unconventional: she defended homosexuals, argued that affairs within marriage could be healthy (such was her own experience), and by the 1960s was arguing that it was almost immoral to marry as a virgin. But she could also be rather prim: she disliked her sons holding hands with their girlfriends in public, and was later to join in criticism of the "pill generation".

The other strength of this book lies in the way it shows how her indomitable crusade for contraception was the public face of Helena Wright's personal background and struggles. Her father, Heinz Lowenfeld, a Polish Jew, became a successful international tycoon. His philosophy was: have your own way and get what you want – power, women (he stipulated to his bride that he would keep mistresses) and wealth (inheriting some of it, Helena was well enough off in the 1930s to afford a staff of four, including a butler). Heinz's English wife, Alice, by contrast, declined into peevish victimhood. Helena detested her mother and

her impotent rages (negligent yet demanding, she deflected them upon her daughters). Though loathing his cruelties, Helena sided with her father and took a leaf out of his book. She would have her way, and women would be victims no longer. Like her father, she told her husband she would have *amours* – she would be in demand, she would be loved, and above all she would give and take exactly on her own terms, never compromising her independence.

There is a splendour to the resolution. Perhaps she never stopped to count the cost, could not afford to if she was to escape the fate of her mother. But Evans sensitively sketches the price she paid for always having to be Dr-in-the-Wright; and the cost to others, especially her husband and children, which came from putting the contraceptive cause first and never allowing her emotional defences to be lowered for a moment. Her husband Henry (she called him Peter: she allowed no one even their own given names) sank into impatient loneliness and depression (for all her zeal for married love, their sexual relationship had gone wrong). And not least she somewhat neglected her children. Professional life and self-fulfilment came first, and, anyway, there was money to pay for nannies and boarding-schools. And she had the knack of cutting herself off from the consequences; when her son Christopher died after experiments with LSD which she had encouraged, she regained contact with him through séances. Conveniently, he told her he was now happier.

Barbara Evans shows skilfully how these inner drives dictated a life lived for over half a century in the public eye. This is not – it does not pretend to be – the history we so badly need of the struggle for birth control in Britain. But it is a vivid portrait of one iron lady of that movement, utterly human in her complex mixture of privilege, sacrifice, commitment, cost and achievement.

David Cook SUNRISING

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Scotsman

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Secker & Warburg

In the heat of the Cold War

Victor Rothwell

ELISABETH BARKER

The British between the Superpowers, 1945-50 270pp. Macmillan. £25. 0333.305752

The readiness of the post-war Labour Government to accept relations of near-hostility with the Soviet Union despite serious tensions in its relations with the United States, whose aid was regarded as essential if Soviet aggressive tendencies were to be kept in check, provides the subject of Elisabeth Barker's latest book. Readers of her previous books on related themes will not be surprised to find a combination of narrative and analytic skills which blend to produce a concise and largely convincing portrait of Britain's role in East-West conflict from 1945 to 1950. This is a book which will be a blessing to students while being assured of a warm welcome from specialist readers.

What is a little surprising is Miss Barker's absolutist approach to sources. Having previously written on post-war subjects from published sources, she has now relied almost entirely on documents, mostly official records. This is unfortunate in regard to Anglo-American relations, which she finds particularly interesting. Reference to some of the American publications on the Cold War would have

made for a more rounded account. To cite but one example, Bevin's claim in 1948 that he was virtually manipulating the United States into an Atlantic security pact, which she quotes uncritically, is not borne out by what has now been published about American conduct of the *Nato* negotiations.

Barker does not hesitate to use her own recollections of this period, which she observed professionally as a diplomatic correspondent. We are told that, although British journalists in central and eastern Europe in the months after the war observed restraint in reporting Soviet excesses, their editors frequently toned down their writings even further which prompts comparisons with Geoffrey Dawson's editorship of *The Times* before 1939. Psychologically, the British public was almost completely unprepared for cold war, but it would be an exaggeration to say that their rulers were in exactly the opposite frame of mind. Their attitude was much more one of suspended judgment.

Having set the scene, Barker eschews diplomatic history in the conventional sense. Her central theme is Britain's defence dilemma. This is a logical choice in the light of the conviction that war was in any case possible, and inevitable if the Western countries did not maintain a large defensive apparatus for deterrent purposes. Many other issues receive little or no treatment. One is the British response – a curious mixture of the cautious and

the ecstatic – to the Stalin-Tito split. Another is Bevin's determination to recognize the communist government in China and to accept it into international society. A third is the British response to Continental moves towards economic integration. Here there was a glaring contrast between private alarm and irritation and an outer determination to be polite and welcoming towards countries while the British were encouraging to build up their defences.

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Restless, radical, Romantic

Pat Rogers

DAVID BROMWICH
Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic
450pp. Oxford University Press. £19.50.
0195033434

"Danger is a good teacher", says Hazlitt in "The Indian Jugglers", and so, he adds, are "disgrace, defeat, exposure to immediate scorn and laughter. There is no opportunity in such cases for self-delusion." David Bromwich does not quote this passage in *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic*, but it points to qualities he values in his subject – the willingness to take risks, the undisguised self-display, the magnanimous use of courting disaster Hazlitt variously celebrated in Napoleon, Shylock, the Wordsworth of *The Excursion* (a heroic failure, something almost preferable to a success), Edmund Kean. Exposure to scorn and laughter has been less of a peril to Hazlitt for some time than neglect. Professor Bromwich wants to remedy this, and understandably furnishes us with a Hazlitt for our times. The old model was too cosy and "debonair" for Bromwich's taste. What then is to replace it?

First, the new Hazlitt is to be made credible as a subversive. "He is the most restless of the English romantics, the most dangerous to his enemies, and in one sense the most shocking." Bromwich is surely profoundly correct in seeing Hazlitt as something more than "a champion of embattled causes: republicanism, democracy, and the freedoms of conscience and the imagination". Beyond this, he was imaginatively of the left, and this comes out in his glowing appraisal of Walter Scott the novelist, in *The Spirit of the Age*, just as it does in the concluding (very unfair) denunciation of Scott the public man. Kean's acting is defined as that of "a radical performer", which is shown in his unKemble-like humanity and his inability to "play a God" – the surprising use of a capital makes us think less of mythological deities than of ostensibly human figures like Othello who had been aggrandized by the art of classical acting. In terms of politics, Bromwich rightly reminds us of Hazlitt's lineage, which comprehended old and new dissenters, and observes that he could "command the full eloquence and moral gravity of Dissent, without its principled bigotry".

Second, a fresh emphasis is laid on Hazlitt's complete *oeuvre*, seen as ultimately establishing his stance as a critic. Bromwich starts by devoting two chapters to the early writing, in particular the *Essay on Human Action* and the abridgement of Abraham Tucker. He confesses to a suspicion that these chapters, "because more closely argumentative, will feel more difficult to some readers than anything that follows them". The suspicion is fully warranted, but that is rather Hazlitt's fault than his interpreter's, for the (comparatively) juvenile works leave a stiff and opaque impression when set alongside the writing of the great period. It is worth the effort on Bromwich's part, however, for almost the opposite reason to the one he intended: we see that Hazlitt may have identified his themes early on, but it took years for him to find the right expressive vehicle in order to say anything cogent.

Elsewhere Bromwich ranges freely. He understandably allots the *Life of Napoleon* more intellectual space than most commentators, and he makes glancing references to the life of Holcroft, the recollections of Northcote, the journey to France and Italy, and even the reply to Malins. But there is disappointingly little on some items, notably the *View of the English Stage*, the lectures on Elizabethan drama, and *Liber Amoris*. The explanation is not far to seek: Bromwich is studiously avoiding describing the trajectory of a career, and trying to slide the distinctions of a chronological kind – which students of Hazlitt have invented to chart his progress as a thinker. One can see that Bromwich would not find attractive the recent hypothesis of Marilyn Butler, in *The Yearbook of English Studies* (1984), which identifies a crucial role for *Liber Amoris* in marking the final transition of Hazlitt's activities from those of dramatic reviewer, critic, journalist and political commentator, to "his final phase as an autobiographical essayist". Bromwich would like this, first because he wishes as far as possible to depersonalise the

essays into the main critical act; and second because it would reduce to autobiography a kind of moral self-concern which Bromwich detects much earlier and which accounts for much of Hazlitt's quiddity as a critic.

There is, incidentally, one short chapter on the essays *per se*, entitled more allusively than revealingly "Familiar Style". This deals with Hazlitt's relationship to Montaigne in brief but intelligent terms, and then subjects three of the better-known essays to some curt examination. The coverage is decent as far as it goes, but really Bromwich has his mind on other things. When one thinks about it, Hazlitt is almost the first English literary critic of any substance who produced no creative work of any moment. He arrives in the wake of Sidney, Dryden, Johnson, Coleridge and Shelley, and differs from them in that his discursive writing easily outdoes his imaginative achievement. Bromwich's response to this situation is twofold. For one thing, he builds up the importance of the critical activity in a way that does not seem deliberately modish, more a reflex of the author's own preoccupations and procedures. The critic's



story, we are told in a concluding theoretical annex, may be as important to us as the artist's story. There are, it is true, scholarly arguments which must abate some of our sympathy for Shylock, but "Hazlitt has construed the play too powerfully for us to respond to such reconstruction". If it could be proved that Shakespeare did not share Hazlitt's view of what *The Merchant of Venice* means, then "we should have to admit (however regretfully) that we preferred Hazlitt's play to Shakespeare's". I confess that this obeisance to the dicta of critics seems excessive, and one may wonder whether many theatre-goers live in quite such awe of the strong readings of their mighty forebears.

The other shift Bromwich employs is to show Hazlitt in a posture of dialogue with his age, and above all with the seminal figures – Burke, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Keats. The heart of this book is taken up by sustained discussion of these relationships, treated in interestingly varied ways. Bromwich shrewdly perceives the competing sublimities of the period, and enforces a number of convincing discriminations through this agency. "From the first", he observes, Hazlitt read Wordsworth "as a poet of the sublime". On the other hand Byron represents the picturesque, which frames, reduces and domesticizes. We know that Hazlitt once referred to Coleridge as "a great, but useless thinker" (the identification comes from William Carew Hazlitt, and ought to be right). Bromwich investigates the nature of the differences between the two men, beginning in the realm of aesthetics but widening out to include a deeper kind of existential and empathic. That Hazlitt was able to write with such generosity of Coleridge at the end of the lectures on the English poets – praising, as it were, with feigned damnation – says a good deal for his residual decency in the midst of intellectual combat (there is the same quality in his appraisal of Bentham in *The Spirit of the Age*; Hazlitt does not let human paths get in the way of his objections to the thinker).

Bromwich is nothing if not literary critical, and he has, of course, themes to expound and

interpretations to unveil. A significant part of the book is the chapter devoted to Keats, where it is contended that "there was no contemporary who was more often in Keats's mind", and more challengingly still that "no other encounter between poet and critic has been so fortunate for literature". Bromwich describes in detail "the way Keats manages to interleave Hazlitt's thoughts and eloquence with his own". A full adjudication on this argument would require an expert witness in the shape of a Keats scholar, but the readings which emerge of the "Nightingale" and "Grecian Urn" strike me as convincing though not exactly trail-blazing. One point of detail: in the former poem, Bromwich claims that "in calling death 'easful' [Keats] means, not 'death, which is always easful' but 'one sort of death which has seemed easful to me'". This seems awkward, first because Keats's use of the perfect tense ("I have been...") suggests there is something crucially new about the present experience; and second because the following phrase, "Now more than ever seems it rich to die", again imports a particularized sense of something felt more broadly or pervasively up till now.

In one of his major themes Bromwich has been anticipated by John Kinnaird, who brought out *William Hazlitt: Critic of Power* in 1977. He honestly acknowledges that Kinnaird's own sense of power at the centre of Hazlitt's thought "has seldom been far from [his] own concerns". It could hardly be otherwise, for Bromwich attaches with Adlerian ferocity to this notion. It is not until page 300 that we reach the formulation, "We can hardly exaggerate Hazlitt's interest in power; it was a theme he found early, and afterwards never sought in vain" – but the words fit the commentator equally. Citing the essay on *Coriolanus*, Bromwich expresses his dominant perception of the age when he writes "The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power" because English poets in the nineteenth century are adepts in the imagination of power. One thinks again of "The Indian Jugglers", where the idea is politicized almost into tautology: "Greatness is a great power, producing great effects. It is not enough that a man has great power in himself, he must show it to all the world in a way that cannot be hid or gainsaid. He must fill up a certain idea in the public mind... A great chess-player is not a great man, for he leaves the world as he found it. No act terminating in itself constitutes greatness." This sails dangerously close to a form of blind instrumentalism, and some of the limitations of Hazlitt as a critic, even in as good a book as *The English Comic Writers*, stem from a reluctance to come to terms with the playful, the oblique, the fanciful and the arbitrary. Bromwich, to some tastes, will seem to overrate strength. It comes out in his 1970s trendy vocabulary, as when he says that Leigh Hunt uses the word *pastoral* "in what has become its strong modern sense, to imply a conjunction of high and low...". Strong as verbs are strong, that is, in collapsing under pressure: *anglicized*, corrupted, strained, Pickwickian (and of course Hunt didn't mean anything to do with inversions of high and low; he meant probably that Hazlitt was given to sermonizing, or less likely that he was addicted to nature notes from Winterslow).

There is much in the book that seems to me new and valuable, especially in the sections where Bromwich confronts Hazlitt with his own contemporaries. However, as we are told in "The Pleasure of Hating", the essayist liked a friend the better for having faults that one can talk about. Similarly, the reader warms to

Bromwich for his engaged advocacy even when sharp disagreement follows. Bromwich generally takes Hazlitt's side, which is as it should be; but not everyone will feel – to take a single instance – that this is altogether judicious in the case of the article on "Pope, Lord Byron, and Mr Bowles". Bromwich has a strange passage in which he contends that Byron's taste for Pope "betrays a curious anachronism" (the verb and object don't quite consort), and Hazlitt in pointing this out is said to be "not a naive apologist for the *avant-garde*... rather a critic distinctly placed in history". Byron can no longer use Pope's arguments for adopting artifice, "being born himself a lord, and with the conviction besides of natural and common rights which everyone after Rousseau must have felt". It is hard to know if Bromwich is in earnest here. He must know as well as anyone that the mind of the age was deeply divided; that the sophistries, self-indulgences and neurotic distortions of Rousseau had been well exposed in England (briefly, by the man himself); and that sane men and women of good will remain at loggerheads over such issues. The complacent assurance that Hazlitt has settled matters is stupefying: "It is no error to admire Pope, but it is somehow pointless, or merely quaint in the present state of things... We are masters of Art, Nature is our Master."

This discussion culminates in an extended quotation from a note by Hazlitt on Byron and Wordsworth. Bromwich implies that it speaks for itself, combining "experience and reading so finely". But are these propositions self-evident?

The author of the *Lyrical Ballads* describes the lichen on the rock, the withered fern, with some particular feeling that he has about them: the author of *Childe Harold* describes the stately cypress or the fallen column, with the feeling that every schoolboy has about them... When Rousseau called out – "All Volla [sic] de la pervenche!" in a transport of joy at sight of the periwinkle, because he had first seen this little blue flower in company with Madame Wren's thirty years before, I cannot help thinking, that any astonishment expressed at the sight of a palm-tree, or even Pompey's Pillar, is vulgar compared to this!

The distinction is indeed strikingly drawn, as with most antithetical pairings in Hazlitt's thought. But Bromwich refers back to it as a kind of touchstone: perhaps he believes that "a critic distinctly placed in history" must share the imaginative priorities set out. Bromwich is perfectly entitled to go along with Hazlitt, if that is his own taste; but there is a serious aesthetic alternative, which sets greater value on feelings of general applicability than those limited to personal, autobiographic or associative sensations.

Although this is a big book in every sense, it is not clear in what ways it will alter our sense of its subject. The Hazlitt who emerges is a slightly more glum fellow than one had recalled. When he writes of Sir James Mackintosh that "he strikes after the iron is cold", this is apart from all else a joke, and indeed the whole of the section in *The Spirit of the Age* exemplifies this comic portrayal of a well-meaning incompetence. There is not much in this book of the Hazlitt who took Tom Moore apart: "Mr Moore ought not to contend with serious difficulties, or with entire subjects. He can write verses, not a poem" – where so much hangs on the delicious "entire subjects". There is in general a displacement of the familiar essays, which some who love Hazlitt will regret. But one cannot have everything between the covers of a single volume. There is one hair-raising misprint, whereby Pope is made to write, "to follies Youth could scare defend", but the production is otherwise extremely pleasant.

John Golding on Boccioni
Anita Brookner on Wattana
Lawrence Gowing on Caravaggio
Tim Hilton on Max Ernst
are some of the contributions which
will appear in next week's
ART HISTORY
number of the TLS

East-side, West-side

Zinovy Zinik

EDWARD LIMONOV
It's Me, Eddie: A fictional memoir.
Translated by S. L. Campbell
264pp. Picador. £7.95 (paperback, £2.95).
0330283294

The Russian original of Edward Limonov's story reads like a desperate letter hastily informing former schoolmates and pals back in his Soviet home town about what to expect should they join the Soviet émigré community in New York. The Soviet populace had never completely lost sight of this legendary metropolis. Maxim Gorky labelled New York "the city of the yellow devil", ie, gold; Mayakovsky described it as a place where the avenues go from South to North while the streets run East to West, and Esenin complained that in New York nobody except Jewish girls read his poetry. Back in the Soviet Union, Limonov and his friends didn't believe these ludicrous statements and disregarded them as cheap Soviet propaganda. His generation could afford to regard the Soviet régime with indifference and disdain, without any sense of complicity or guilt. And off they went at the first opportunity – following the direction of the New York streets – from East to West, to the land of freedom and liberty, of which they had become aware in the 1960s, from rumours leaking through the Iron Curtain. Behind the Iron Curtain they did indeed find the Statue of Liberty and Radio Liberty but otherwise, as Limonov's characters discover, Gorky, Mayakovsky, Esenin and the rest of the Soviet classics were perfectly right. And it was the anti-Soviet classics, Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, who were wrong, who "turned us against

the Soviet world without ever having set eyes on the Western world", as Eddie insists.

Eddie Limonov arrives in New York to discover that the West of the Soviet dissidents' dreams is as bad as the East of the Western Sovietologists' concoction. Mankind worships the yellow devil on both sides of the Atlantic and ignores Limonov's poetry. Full of disrespect for the aims of any society unless the way it achieves those aims fulfills his own personal criteria, this *satirical* poet and amateur trouser-maker confesses to the reader how he, rejected by officialdom on both sides, condemns the hypocrisy of civilization and discovers for himself a new brotherhood among the oppressed and dissatisfied.

The way to such a brotherhood lies through innumerable sexual encounters with both men and women, and it is the ability of a partner to reach orgasm that forms Eddie's criterion for spiritual freedom. Eddie's own search for freedom is soured by the looming presence of his former wife, the irresistible and whorish Elena, who left him to pursue the false dream of the Western world they once shared. The sadomasochistic image of Elena becomes obtrusively symbolic of Limonov's relationship with Russia. The printed Russian word is still as puritanical as it was in the nineteenth-century and still lacking in erotic vocabulary. It cannot accommodate the abundance of unprintable expressions or the enthusiastic investigations of sex in Limonov's book. Given this, and the indiscriminate Russian transcription of those American words that have become a part of the Russian émigré vocabulary, the original of Limonov's book sometimes reads like a bad translation into Russian. S. L. Campbell's translation into American English returns this "first draft" type of writing to the happy family of beatnik literature, Kerouac, Bukowsky et al.

But it remains exotic for an English reader, because the protagonist of this having-it-off drama is a Russian dissident. Instead of a saint-like figure, however, tormented in Stalin's prisons and psychiatric hospitals, who, having been expelled from his motherland, exposes the hypocrisy of socialism and warns the Western world of left-wing conspiracy, we have Limonov, who compares the CIA to the KGB and proclaims bisexuality as a salvation from tyranny and oppression. Mayakovsky, whom Limonov clearly admires, once stressed the stereotype of the morally invincible bolshevik: "If a weeping bolshevik were exhibited in a museum, gawpers would stare at this rarity from dawn to dusk." Limonov has decided to exhibit a weeping dissident; and gawpers have not hesitated to come and stare.

This debunking of the dissident legend was intended, first and foremost, to shock the émigré community. Limonov's characters belong to a semi-underground welfare *demi-monde*, recently augmented by thousands of immigrants from the USSR. The atmosphere of welfare, with its dependence on government administration, its distribution of subsidies, funds and grants has roved in the émigré world the deeply implanted Soviet instincts for innuendo, censorship, intolerance and protectionism. If it is true that every nation gets the government it deserves, then every émigré imitates the régime he has escaped. Most of the recent émigrés from the Soviet Union left the country voluntarily – they were allowed out on the understanding they would never be allowed in again. Those who have realized that their daring leap had ended in failure try to picture their Soviet past as gloomily as possible, so as to brighten their own feelings about the present. It is this hypocrisy of emigration that Limonov vigorously tries to expose. But Eddie's complete dependence on those same

psychological categories that he attempts to dismiss, and the purely Pavlovian response the émigré world provokes in him, have turned his writing into ventriloquism. In that sense the English subtitle of the book – "A fictional Memoir" – refers to the fictional, or perhaps even defective, memory of the author. According to his own statements, the author Edward Limonov is identical in his views and way of life with Eddie. His book is a documentary, an eye-witness account, and its purely ethnographic value is diminished by being falsely called a fiction.

In Western literature Limonov's memoir would easily have found its place among the humorous "true confessions" of voyeurs and tramps. Unfortunately, the Russian literary tradition does not allow for Limonov's sort of deviation from the high road of "great prose"; and when a writer fails to slot in somewhere between Pushkin and Nabokov he is rejected. Still, one can find predecessors even for Limonov: in the "dark age" of Russian letters of the 1880s and in the naturalistic writings of the precursors of Socialist Realism – writers such as Uspensky and Skitalets, who captivated the minds of the Russian intelligentsia with their indignant exposure of the "lower depths" of society. It was a period of crisis in literary aesthetics and of the birth of "progressive" literature. Crises in aesthetics always lead to an increased stress on social ethics – to the condemnation of civilization and a preoccupation with social injustice, identification with the oppressed and ethnic minorities. It leads to demands for sincerity in literature, sincerity by any means, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau's description of childish acts of exhibitionism. And it was he who was the first to proclaim: "I may be no better, but at least I am different." Edward Limonov is a loyal follower of that tradition today.

A nice class of enemy

John Melmoth

ALEXEISAYLE
Train to Hell
With additional material by David Stafford
152pp. Methuen. £7.50 (paperback, £2.50).
0143 52460 4

SNOO WILSON
Spacechee
160pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press
£7.95 (paperback, £3.50).
07011 2785 6

Alexei Sayle is a self-confessed Marxist; his first novel, in consequence, concerned not with the struggle of the proletariat or the intricacies of the dialectic, but with vilifying and offending the middle classes. Brawler and vulgarian, he abuses BBC producers, readers of the *Observer* colour supplement, young designers called Pippa who contrive to "shag up a perfectly decent fish warehouse", liaison officers on Youth Training Schemes, modern architects, consumers of folk art, exponents of the Alternative, anyone who plays old Beach Boys records at parties. His contempt for the political and cultural pretensions of a liberal intelligentsia causes his blood pressure to soar. He is made faint with anger by the radical check of the "Crab on the Rates" dance troupe, the radical pique of the soft Left confronting the hostility of an alien working class, the radical chi-chi of people who stencil flowers on their lavatory bowls. "I hate the bastards, I wonder why that is?" There is no doubting the sincerity of Sayle's invective; it is no fault of his that the class enemy thus defined is distinctly unalarming.

Train to Hell climaxes in a shoot-out in Habitat. The destruction of serried ranks of ceramic lamps, Provencal crockery, Cotswold couches and things for growing grass in is a piece of jolly wish-fulfilment that does nothing to invalidate a way of life, still less a view of the world. It is a facile indictment of the original sin of class; an equitation of manners and morals, fashion and politics. What, one is inclined to ask, about CND, the Peace Movement, Amnesty International, the NCCL, the theorists of New Left Review and the executive of the Socialist Worker's Party?

Ironically, given its pugnacious anti-intellectualism, *Train to Hell* is foppishly self-obsessed, introspective, continuously evaluating its status as a text, urbanely preoccupied with the terms of its own existence even if these purportedly have to do exclusively with a curs commercialism. Sayle has determined upon what he regards as the most lucrative of art forms: "one of those journals-of-an-international-rail-journey jobbies". Because all the more spectacular journeys have already been done by writers with larger advances from their publishers, Sayle is reduced to reporting on a closed football special from Liverpool to Rome.

Train to Hell rehearses a Jamesian epistemological crisis: what Sayle sees is the substance and meaning of the novel and what he sees is... well, nothing.

There was some wavy yellow stuff, some brownish stuff and some green stuff growing on trees... Then on the horizon we passed a big thing... The train picked up speed. There suddenly was a really interesting – no, it's gone. Here's a... shit, that's gone too.

Our guide proves to be a blinkered, glaucomatic empiricist, an aphasic Baedeker unable to

categorize the raw data that are his stock-in-trade. In case so much local colour should prove wearisome, Sayle adds a mystery killing (a Murder on the Leyton Orient Express) and illustrations which owe something to Spike Milligan and something to Glen Baxter.

In the event, there is no commentary on the match, and Rome is dismissed as a pile of ruins in need of pebble-dashing. Sayle's real interest is Liverpool, betrayed by corrupt City Councilors who have sold their birthright for "silver tea services and holidays in the typhoid belt of North Africa". Once, there was a city with flourishing docks, colourful manufactories and full employment; now, "it's like Beirut with job centres". The waste of a community cannot be forgiven.

A recommendation from the TLS is likely to be regarded by Sayle as the kiss of death. Were it to be suggested that *Train to Hell* is genuinely original and very funny in patches, social-workers might order it from their favourite North London book shop and display it on their stripped-pine shelves along with *The History Man* and *Mrs Weber's Diary*.

Snoo Wilson makes his debut as a novelist

Song of the Diplomat

When the Party's losses are the People's gains
You'll find me near the border changing trains.

You'll find me near the border changing trains
When the blood runs free and the free blood stains.

When the blood runs free and the free blood stains
The People's losses are the Party's gains.

When the People's losses are the Party's gains
You'll find me near the border changing trains.

JOHN MOLE

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with a shabby dystopia, a genre-biffing spoof. His Great Rocket Journey from Gatwick to Neptune uneasily welds politics and a trip round the universe, though *Spacechee* lacks the verve and manic indignation of *Train to Hell*. Wilson's send-up of the conventions of SF derives from Douglas Adams's whimsical absurdity and the chilly nastiness of William Burroughs. The satire lacks direction: the novel is almost as hostile to the repressed suburbanite pottering in his greenhouse as it is to the murderous egomaniacs of senescent judges who get their jollies from firing enemies of the state into the heart of the sun. The book has "acid" social points to make about abortion on demand or the business ethics of the feeble barons, but these are somewhat obscured in a tangle of loose ends and unexplored ludic possibilities.

Wilson's post-nuclear fictional world is shaped by a sustained attack on civil liberties, urban decay, high rises, electronic surveillance, corrupt and violent law enforcement, mass unemployment. The government of the day has initiated a cryogenic project for coping with underemployment: no-hoppers are freeze-dried, matter-reduced and sent into orbit to await the millennium (an idea first mooted in Wilson's play *The Glad Hand*). Christie, sixteen years old, sexually harassed by her father and boyfriend, "a falling star in a firmament of losers", regards cryogeny as her best hope of being left alone – "I'm going into the future because everything that happens now is shitty, and there's no hope, none at all, understand?" When she accidentally re-materializes on the deck of the spaceship carrying her and her timed peers into dumping orbit, her desire for life proves sufficiently strong to halt the planets in their courses and catapult everyone aboard onto Neptune. Neptune, it transpires, is a vast, subterranean, criminal underworld, the economy of which is based on hard drugs, video buggery, spare-part surgery and snuff movies. Her experiences encourage Christie to polish up her self-image, albeit to little probable effect.

Where *Spacechee* scores is in its nearness to the knuckle. Wilson, who has courted outrage on the public stage, has discovered scope in the private nature of the novel for indulging a quirky, unpleasant and enigmatic sense of humour.

Form and response

Michael Sullivan

SUSAN BUSH and CHRISTIAN MURK (Editors)
Theories of the Arts in China
448pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£39.
0691 040206

In her introduction to this collection of essays Susan Bush describes the aims of the Boston conference of June 1979, sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies, out of which it emerged. "We asked ourselves", she writes, "such broad questions as: When did the Chinese become aware of the aesthetic response to nature and to human artefacts as an intellectual problem? What arts became the vehicle within high culture for cultivating and expressing aesthetic responses? What were the terms of discourse in the arts, and how were theories of the arts articulated in relation to other concerns?" As Dr Bush points out, "traditional Chinese criticism speaks from the centre of a holistic culture". This point, made also by several other contributors, enables them, indeed obliges them, to range far and wide over many facets of Chinese civilization. The result is the most important book on Chinese aesthetics that has yet appeared in the West. Of the many issues it raises, I can only in a short review touch on two: the relation between aesthetics and history in China, and the connection between Buddhism and landscape art.

Maureen Robertson in her opening essay contributes to the unending debate on periodization in Chinese history, and to the question of how far cultural rise and fall can be matched against the rise and fall of dynasties. The traditional Chinese view was that a Dynasty must have declined for the mandate of Heaven to have been withdrawn; so the arts in its decline must have declined too. The landscapes of the southern Sung academicians Ma Yuan and Hsia Kuei therefore cannot be as praiseworthy as those of the early Sung masters Fan K'uan and Kuo Hsi. The norm is *cheng* (correctness); *pien* (change) must mean a change for the worse. Yet what of the powerful artistic personalities in periods of dynastic decline such as Mu-ch'ang? And what of the extraordinary creative richness of that most unstable era, the Six Dynasties? Dr Robertson is well aware of the inconsistencies, and of the temptation facing writers on Chinese culture to wrap their subject up neatly just to make it more manageable. She ends her piece with this comment: "The simple analytical categories offered in this study have a heuristic value in the initial attempt to trace fundamental patterns; held to rigidly, however, they could work to obscure the protean quality of the materials themselves". It is greatly to the credit of these authors that on the whole they keep the lines open and the thought flowing freely in every useful direction.

It is now generally accepted that Tung Ch'ang's doctrine of the Northern and Southern schools of landscape painting, put forward around 1600 for the purpose of extolling the art of the literati at the expense of that of the professionals, has had a dire effect on both Chinese criticism and modern Western writing on the subject. Richard Barnhart discusses the conflicting views of critics who preceded Tung, particularly those of Li K'ai-hsien who, far from making Shen Chou the supreme Ming painter, puts him only seventh on his list, giving the honours to two out-and-out professionals, Tai Ch'ing and Wu Wei; and of Ho Lang-ch'ün, who extolled the literati and Shen Chou above all. Their comments on the traditions each despised may lack the Chinese scholar's customary urbanity, but are all the livelier for that. Wang B. says Li K'ai-hsien, is like a corrupt official, "his hat is black silk but his person is that of a butcher"; while Ho Lang-ch'ün says that as for Chiang Sung and Wang Chün, two professionalists, "I would be ashamed to wipe my table with their paintings!" It is refreshing to see the art of the literati dismissed for its lack of originality, that of the leading professionals given its due for its "heroic spirit".

But while one must admire the vigour and skill of the Ming professional painters such as Chiang Sung and Wang Chün, what is to be said of the literati? The essays of the contributors to this book are a distinguished example of

only are some of their works positively unpleasant to look at (the Shih Chung reproduced in this book, for example), but their best qualities are all on the surface: they lack those undertones, that sense of something "beyond the image", which even many of the less skilful scholar painters managed to convey. In his essay on the "Human Body and Calligraphy" (a most original contribution to the symposium), Dr Hay has a quotation from Owen Barfield on Aquinas which seems to fit the Chinese scholar painters, "knowledge was defined . . . as an act of union with the represented behind the representation". Behind the representations of the Ming professional painters, brilliant as they are, there is often nothing at all.

Tsung Ping's short essay on landscape painting, written about 430 AD, has already been translated many times, but in the papers by Munakata Kiyohiko and Dr Bush it is given a much deeper scrutiny, helped by Japanese scholarship, with particular reference to its Buddhist content. Tsung Ping was a profound student of Buddhism, connected with the circle of the great theologian Hui-yün, so it is natural that his ideal of reality apprehended through nature should be deeply coloured by Buddhist metaphysics. But many of these ideas are far older than Buddhism, as both these writers acknowledge. Tsung Ping begins by referring to the Yellow Emperor and Confucius, and to mountains sacred long before Buddhism reached China. If his essay is not explicitly Buddhist, that, says Munakata, is because Tsung Ping "simply wanted to avoid using Buddhist terms in the 'landscape essay'", although he does not explain why.

Whenever possible Munakata gives the essay an almost exclusively Buddhist slant, often dragging in the word "karmic" with no obvious justification, as in this passage near the end of the essay: "This is the experience of the mystical communion and the spiritual (karmic) interaction (of the man and the great mountains), with which the viewer's spirit achieves transcendence and his mind attains the truth". This is making very heavy weather of a passage which Bush translates "The essence of spirit, being limitless, resides in forms and responds to species, and truth enters into reflections and traces". In other words, the essential spirit is made manifest in the visible forms of nature (and hence in the landscape painting). Bush reinforces her more judicious assessment of the Buddhist elements in Tsung Ping's essay, by translating, for the first time, the "Introduction to Poetry on Wandering at the Stone Gate", a marvellous description of a mountain climb by Hui-yün and his friends, seen as a metaphor for the striving after nirvana. Bush suggests that Tsung Ping's stress on the guiding role of the Sages brings him closer to Confucianism than to Taoism, but the idea of illumination sought and found in the mountains is surely Taoist.

All the contributors to this fascinating volume wrestle with the problems of translation. Sometimes prejudices appear, as when Hay makes *tsu-jan* (nature, natural) sound Buddhist by rendering it "thusness" ("calligraphy originates in thusness . . . when thusness is established . . ."). Often the problem arises because the Chinese character embodies so much more than a single English word could convey. So it seems right to translate *shün* (heart) as "heart-mind" (Hay), *ch'ü* (not just a breath of vapour, but as "configurational energy" (de Woskin on music). Hay's "force-form" for *shü*, clumsy as it is, gets closer to the meaning than would either word alone; while to attempt to explain what *feng* (literally "wind") means in Chinese aesthetics one would have to cope with concepts in anatomy and physiology, psychology, ethics and metaphysics.

These essays - and I have only touched on a few of those that deal with visual art - leave the reader with a sense of Chinese aesthetics not as a system, or even as a number of different systems, but as an agglomeration of ideas and concepts which seem to flow like oil and around each other, not susceptible to exact analysis but rather inviting reflection and commentary, in which the commentator enriches, discovers and reveals himself. That, to the Chinese, is the end and aim of learning, and this book is a distinguished example of

Mixing with the immortals

D. J. Enright

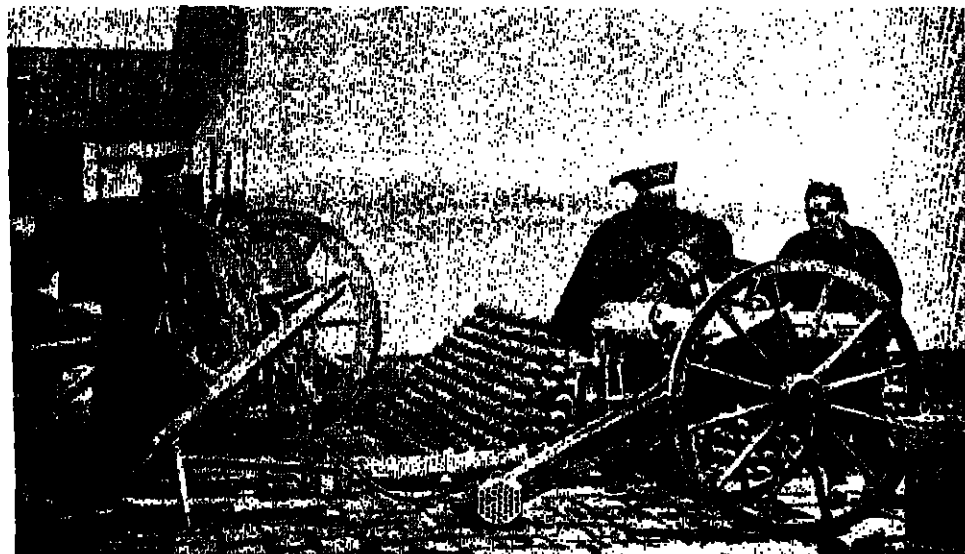
H. C. CHANG
Chinese Literature 3: Tales of the Supernatural
169pp. Edinburgh University Press. £9.
085224 454 1

In his *Chinese Literature* series H. C. Chang has adopted the sensible procedure of following a general introduction to the genre in question with illustrative examples, newly translated. Addressing himself to both the general reading public and the student of Chinese, he is wise not to put all his eggs in one basket: the poet who aims at the "general reader" may well find himself left with a virtually invisible public, and the same is likely to be true of the oriental scholar. The present is the third of six volumes, and it will be interesting to see whether, in the field of poetry, Dr Chang improves on James J. Y. Liu's expository and critical study, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (1962), which the "non-specialist reader" for whom it was intended will have found both informative and confusingly set out.

In the introduction Chang pots quite nimbly the plots of supernatural tales between the fourth and the seventeenth centuries; and for the greater part the plots are all we want. Many of them involve marriage, usually temporary

merely enjoying her female charms! This codicil is missing from the version called "The Fox Fairy" in the pleasing though (I suspect) less scholarly collection, *The Golden Casket* (1965, translated by Christopher Levenson from German translations by Wolfgang Bauer and Herbert Franke).

Other recurrent themes are revenge by ghosts for wrongs suffered in their lifetime, visitation of erring husbands by the spirits of deserted wives, conducted tours of hell (Chang observes that under the influence of Buddhist ghosts grew more respectable and respected), and visits paid by scholars, perhaps in dreams, to past ages. (In a seventeenth-century tale, a ghost candidate in hell prepares himself for an examination by burning model essays and swallowing the ashes; he is set a tricky question: since malefactors are arriving in such numbers that hell is full up, "discuss in detail" all possible means of accommodating them.) Historians might enhance their professional reputations, no doubt, by seizing the opportunity to discourse with long-dead emperors, though they had to be cautious when flirting with the attendant concubines. It is considered quite natural, a matter of course, that a human and a spirit, thrown together, should make for the nearest and seemingly solid bed. The reader, however, is not invited to participate. These writings do not fall into that category



The Nanking Arsenal in the 1860s, reproduced from John Thomson's *China and Its People in Early Photographs*, which has been recently reissued with a foreword by Janet Lehr (212pp. Constable. £11.70. 0 486 24393 1).

or intermittent, between humans and spirits, the latter being either "immortals" (gods and goddesses) or else the ghosts of those who have died of frustrated love and thus contrive to acquire an earthly slice of pie in the sky. There is no hint of necrophilic perversion here; indeed, children are often born of these mixed unions.

Animals - apes, tigers, birds, pigs, ants - feature widely, whether as beast transformed into man or as man transformed into beast. The carp is especially favoured, though not as food, since it may turn out to be the Dragon King disporting himself in carp's clothing. In a ninth-century story given in full here, the hero passes into a death-like state, desires the freedom of a fish, is changed into a carp, caught with a hook, and beheaded by his own cook; he rises from the dead just in time to dissuade his friends from tucking into a dish of minced carp.

But commonest of all, as in Japanese folklore, are fox spirits, those perennial heroines who assume the form of beautiful though not notably ladylike ladies. If excessively amorous, they can seriously damage a person's health. On one occasion, however, a marriage with a human male is abandoned on the grounds that he associates with a notorious hunter. On another, a beautiful immortal, third daughter of the Queen Mother of Heaven, is irretrievably offended because her future mother-in-law suspects her - so incredibly beautiful is she - of being a fox. Fox spirits sometimes need to cover their postions in order to hide their brushes - the old lady should have taken a surreptitious look in their quarter. The nicely circumstantial eighth-century story "Miss Jen", printed here in full, ends with a piece of moralizing. If only Master Cheng had talked seriously with his clever fox-mistress (most unfortunately killed by hounds, Cheng had to buy the dead fox from the hunter) and learnt from her the principles of metamorphosis and the relation between spirit and matter, instead of

sometimes seen as domestic sociology or marital aids.

Flower spirits blossom out in one of the four complete items by P'u Sung-ling (1640-1715), the most celebrated and (it would seem) most individualistic writer in this genre, and also - he is credited with 491 tales, mainly of folk origin but shaped by him - the most prolific. A connoisseur of chrysanthemums marries unknowingly into a family of chrysanthemum spirits; his wife, Yellow Pride, makes a fortune from marketing unusually fine blooms, but his brother-in-law, T'ao, succumbs to strong drink. The author concludes lightly: "To die of drunkenness after spending a carefree life, though deplored by the world, need not be an unhappy ending." Moreover, T'ao lives on as a variety of chrysanthemum smelling faintly of wine.

But the most touching story here, included also in *The Golden Casket*, is the eleventh-century "Dark Robe Land", whose shipwrecked hero is cast ashore on a hospitable island, where he is well received by the king and marries a bewitching woman. Feeling homesick, he is mysteriously carried back to his own country - by birds; whereupon he realizes that he has been staying in the Kingdom of the Swallows. By means of migrating swallows, he and his distant mate exchange poems of love, loss and regret.

The literature of the supernatural, in particular the depiction of a generally helpful commerce between the two worlds, appears to have played a more important role in China than in the West. Possibly the Chinese, more than most, have needed the relief from the cares, hardships and uncertainties of life that "superstition" can provide. The "poetry of life", Goethe called it, and not even the most efficient welfare state, the securest peace, is likely to drive it out. So perhaps the present book will (as it deserves) find a welcome from the Japanese reader as well as the English.

The Roman Danger

Christopher Hope

ANDREW PRIOR (Editor)
Catholics in Apartheid Society
197pp. Cape Town: David Philip (available in the UK from International Book Distributors). Paperback, £8.70.
0908396724
J. B. BRAIN
Christian Indians in Natal 1860-1911
274pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50.
019 5702972

Roman Catholics in South Africa have long been held in somewhat fearful regard by the Nationalist government. Many have been the warnings against "die Roomse Gevaar", the Roman Danger. But then frequent warnings against the enemies of Afrikanerdom have always been a feature of the regime which defines itself and rallies its supporters with recitals of the lists of colourful demons ranged against it. Besides the Roman, there is the Black Danger as well as the Red Threat, the Yellow Peril and even the Pink Menace. The quarrel with Catholics, however, has been theological rather than political. There was initially among Calvinist Afrikaners a ready dis-

like for the practices and customs of Catholicism, and anyone raised in a predominantly Afrikaans city or province will recall the thoroughgoing contempt felt for Catholic priests, those funny foreign men who went around in dresses. If this position is changing, as the contributors to *Catholics in Apartheid Society* would argue that it is, with the Church taking a clearer stand on racial questions, then this has happened recently, slowly and unevenly. The change may owe something to the liberalizing effects of Vatican II, but rather more, I venture, to angrier gatherings in Sharpeville and Soweto. Most of the writers in this book make a good deal of the effect of the Second Vatican Council, but few can have been around at the time, or they have short memories, for the Catholic newspaper, the *Southern Cross*, was quick to condemn even the use of the terms liberal and conservative to describe the contending camps in Rome and deplored this tendency to drag the language of worldly politics into the spiritual deliberations of the Church fathers.

This book does not, as the title suggests it might, offer an insight into what Catholics in South Africa feel and think. Instead it represents the views of leading clerics and academics

convinced that the Church in South Africa must be more truly African if it is to become the significant force for change; and it is clear that they have political change in mind. The contributions are uneven, and Albert Nolan's achingly predictable lament on the awfulness of life in the apartheid state and Denis Hurley's breezy tour of important foreign landmarks in the history of Catholic social teaching do little to establish an intellectually convincing context for the essays on the current position of the Church which follow; and yet these constitute the heart of a substantial and important discussion. The book is worth having for essays by John de Gruchy on Catholics and Calvinists, Bridgid Flannagan on Catholic education, James Kiernan on the separatist black Churches and Mandlenkosi Zwane on black Catholics.

The Catholic Church in South Africa has always differed from the English Protestant Churches, and from the Anglican Church in particular. The latter's crusading liberal clerics from the Revd John Philip to Trevor Huddleston have been detested by the authorities, condemned and expelled ever since slave-owning times. But, as Roman Catholics educated during the 1950s and 60s will remember, the immigrant brothers and sisters who ran the Catholic schools were there to police the souls of wild colonial children and not to talk politics, about which they knew little and cared less. White Catholics had their parishes; black Catholics had the missions. The Church was hardly in a position to protest against apartheid since, as Jabulani Nxumalo points out, it has practised its own form of separate development. In recent years there have been moves towards integration, but the writers here seem agreed that much more must be done if the Church in South Africa, where already eight out of ten Catholics are black, is to "matter" in the sense that Adrian Hastings uses that term in his fine, combative piece.

The statements of the South African bishops dealing with race relations, issued over the past

quarter-century, are here most usefully reprinted, and the increasing urgency of their tone is notable. The Church will have to come to terms with the majority of its members. But then so of course must South African society. Calls for justice, peace, change are made so often and with such vigour in South Africa that they become a substitute for the things themselves. What black Catholics think and want - and whether their white brethren will grant it - is not explored in these essays. South Africa is ruled by convinced segregationists who practise a peculiar form of Calvinism, and they have increased their hold on power with almost every election since the war. The recent integration of Catholic schools and seminaries, as the contributors to *Catholics in Apartheid Society* are quick to point out, is no great advance. After all, hoteliers with their multi-racial bars have done no less.

A tiny, vulnerable Christian minority which survived against the odds in South Africa were the Indian Christians who came to Natal between 1860 and 1911. J. B. Brain has made a most absorbing study of this resilient fragment, a little over 2,000 in a total Indian population of 152,184 who came to the sugar plantations, some as indentured labourers, other as paying passengers on the ships from Madras and Calcutta, leaving behind famine and hardship and clearly hoping for a better life in Natal. Brain has drawn on shipping lists and church registers for her statistical profiles, which are crisply presented; but the fascination of this book is her study of the early missions to the Christian Indians carried out by a variety of devoted pastors working in valiant obscurity, and she includes photographs of some of these missionaries and of their first churches. A certain poignancy underlies the statistics for, as Brain shows, many Christians returned to India, and the wretched lives they had tried to escape, preferring this to racial persecution in South Africa. *Christian Indians in Natal* is an elegant, scholarly study, but it is also a work of considerable imaginative sympathy.

Segregation in the ranks

Richard West

KENNETH W. GRUNDY
Soldiers Without Politics: Blacks in the South African Armed Forces
297pp. University of California Press
(distributed in the UK by International Book Distributors). £18.85.
0520047109

RON REID DALY and PETER STIFF
Selous Scouts: Top Secret Story
432pp. Galago, 11 Shrewsbury Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4DB. £15.95.
0620057718

Kenneth W. Grundy has already published a book called *Confrontation and Accommodation in Southern Africa*, so he clearly knows something about the background to his latest subject, the role of the blacks in South Africa's armed forces. The source notes in his new work quote a few interviews on the spot, as well as a mass of references to South African newspapers, government hand-outs and parliamentary debates.

Partly because of Professor Grundy's sociological prose, this book appears three or four times as long as its 283 pages, but those who persist will find many items of interest. It is pertinent to recall the debate that went on among South African whites in both World Wars on whether, and in what capacity, to use black troops. Although many more blacks were recruited in the Second World War than in the First, their casualties (fewer than 3,000 dead) were lower: this time they did not take part in the actual fighting because of the South Africans' fear of the long-term consequences of teaching them combat duties. This policy produced resentment among those blacks who had hoped that military service would merit better treatment. As Grundy says: "Segregation sometimes reached ludicrous proportions. There are accounts of Cape Corps staff sergeants in the Middle East being forced to act as cooks and batmen to white privates. When the South African army headquarters heard that South African soldiers, including a number of black stretcherbearers, killed in the battle of Sidi Razegh had been buried in a common grave, it ordered their disinterment and reburial in separate black and white graves."

When the Afrikaner National Party came to power in 1948, it took steps to reduce the role of non-whites in the forces, then put this policy into reverse when, in the 1970s, more troops, regardless of colour, were needed to meet the threat from Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Grundy examines the South African Police Force and shows that the blacks, who make up half of its strength, are paid about one-third less than their white opposite numbers. He does not explain or discuss the puzzle, long question why the South African government pays such miserable wages to the police

of all colours. In 1980 the base salaries for a constable were R2100 - \$160 for a white, and for a black R1272 - \$350 (with the Rand at about £0.70). Although such wages attracted quite good-quality blacks, they brought in some of the poor-white riff-raff, which helps to explain the disgraceful, and amply proven, brutality and stupidity of the SAP. (A real totalitarian state, like Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, invariably makes its police a privileged and well-paid élite.)

If Grundy had been content to gather and present all the relevant facts upon his subject, we might have been grateful to him for his hard work. Alas, he has felt obliged to embellish the facts with complacent, tendentious jibes against the South African regime. Surely everyone knows by now that South Africa has a system of racial segregation?

On the South African army's decision to form separate Kavango and Ovambo battalions, Grundy writes that these "unabashedly tribal formations" are part of a plan to "divide and dominate". But forming regiments from people of similar language, tribe and geographical regions is natural to all countries except perhaps the United States. Only an American could believe, as Grundy does, that "black consciousness is an inclusive concept, embracing black Africans, Coloureds and Indians". If the "melting pot" has so dismally failed in the US, why should it succeed in the far more heterogeneous collection of races, languages and religions that is South Africa?

Grundy notes that the commander of the Transkei's military forces, now General Reid Daly, created and led Rhodesia's "elite unit, the controversial Selous Scouts". Daly has told his own story in a book which is as tedious as Grundy's though in the opposite way. Almost entirely lacking in theory or speculation, *Selous Scouts* dulls the reader with its proliferation of detail about counter-insurgency warfare. From the formation of the Selous Scouts in 1973 till their dispersal in 1980, we are given pen portraits of dozens of men recruited, dozens of terrorists "turned" and hundreds of long-forgotten skirmishes in the bush, or raids into neighbouring black-run countries.

Properly edited, this could have been a gripping enough story. Much of it is fascinating, such as the several attempts to assassinate Joshua Nkomo. Although Reid Daly seems to be a quarrelsome man, and did not get on with the General Staff, he is frank and apparently truthful on most topics. He knew very well that most of the Africans in the tribal trust lands were on the side of the rebels. He also found, to his own surprise, that black Rhodesian troops, and even converted terrorists, proved to be loyal and expert Selous Scouts. Even the Afrikaners who joined the Selous and at first refused to work with blacks found themselves losing their colour sense in the comradeship of war.

The third, unfinished volume of Arthur Koestler's autobiography, written jointly with his wife Cynthia, provides a remarkable and fascinating insight into the life of one of the most extraordinary figures of the 20th century.

'A fascinating book . . . a true, romantic story of total devotion, absolute loyalty, unconditional surrender and true love' George Mikes, *Sunday Telegraph*

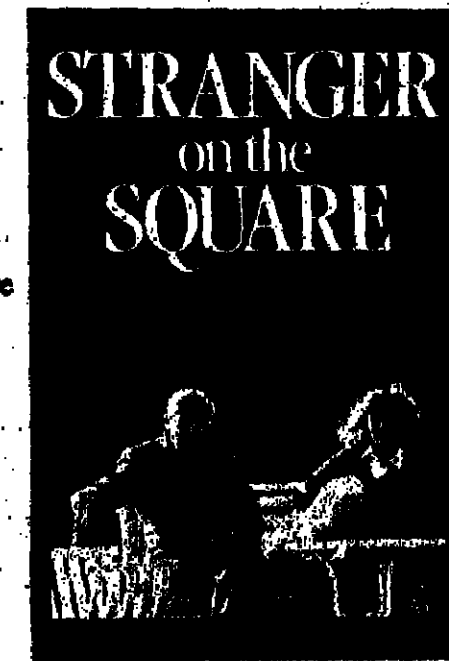
'An intimate glimpse of Koestler's life' Mary Benson, *Guardian*

'The story of the two Arthur Koestlers - the wild, tormented man Cynthia Jefferies fell in love with, and the man of letters at Montpelier Square' Godfrey Hodgson, *New Statesman*

'Compelling reading' John Chandos, *New Society*

242pp 8pp photographs
ISBN 09 154330 4
Hutchinson £9.95

'A remarkably interesting book . . . an authentic love story, and a highly compelling one' John Gross, *Observer*



The Gorse Hall affair

Julian Symons

JONATHAN GOODMAN
The Stabbing of George Harry Storrs
236pp. Allison and Busby. £8.95.
0850315417

The murder in 1909 of George Harry Storrs, owner of Gorse Hall on the Lancashire-Cheshire border, has the enclosed, artificial atmosphere of many Sherlock Holmes stories. In September the family is at dinner when a voice is heard outside in the garden saying: "Hold up your hands or I will shoot." Two shots are fired (but no bullets found), the window glass is broken, the attack never explained. An alarm bell is installed, and seven weeks later it is ringing to some purpose. The cook finds a man hiding behind the kitchen door; he is seen also by the housemaid. He rushes into the hall, and Storrs comes out of the dining room. "Now I've got you", the intruder says. He is seen by Mrs Storrs and her niece Marion Lindley, who also lives in the house. Mrs Storrs threatens the man with a shillelagh hanging on the wall, snatches away the gun in his hand and is told by her husband to go up and sound the alarm. She does so. Marion Lindley runs out of the house to fetch help. When the police arrive they find Storrs bleeding to death in the kitchen. Mrs Storrs is still upstairs ringing the bell. Storrs makes repeated requests to speak to his wife, but she is in her bedroom, perhaps in a state of collapse. He is asked the man's identity, and says several times: "I don't know". By the time Mrs Storrs comes down he has lapsed into unconsciousness. He dies.

If it were a Holmes story the plot would be straightforward. The mysterious stranger would be somebody out of Storrs's guilty past, the first visit announced his intentions, installation of the alarm bell was a desperate attempt to avert inevitable vengeance. Storrs's anxiety to speak to his wife sprang from a desire to tell her the truth. Several Holmes stories have similar themes. In fact, however, no secret from the past was ever discovered. Storrs was an impeccably respectable man. A cousin

named Cornelius Howard, whom Storrs had not seen for eleven years, was arrested, tried, and acquitted when he proved an alibi. Several months later a man named Mark Wilde was also arrested, tried and acquitted. The mystery remained unsolved.

Jonathan Goodman, who has written the first full-length book about the case, is also the author of the definitive study of the Wallace murder, and an almost equally good book about the burning of Evelyn Foster in 1931. Goodman is the premier English investigator of crimes past. His prime virtues are the thoroughness of his research, and a manifest determination to be reasonable. He lacks the stylishness of William Roughhead and the adroitness that enabled Edgar Lustgarten to turn almost every case he wrote about into a legal battle of wits, but one trusts Mr Goodman to mention every vital fact, as one could not trust either Roughhead or Lustgarten. His destruction of Ysult Bridges's account of the Wallace murder, simply by demonstration of her numerous and important inaccuracies, is beautifully done. He is not a man to sacrifice factual accuracy to liveliness.

His researches into the Gorse Hall affair have been as thorough as usual. Several visits to Stalybridge where Gorse Hall stood, talks with local people, consultations with a local solicitor and the Stalybridge Historical Society, searches of registers and files: we are in no doubt that whatever could be discovered seventy years after the event has been found. The investigations have been rewarding in relation to the police and to the legal figures involved in the trials. The portrait of Detective Inspector Pierce, dapper, boyish, with a quiff of dark hair, "abreast of fashion with a pointed collar and a small bow tie", is particularly good. Pierce became committed to the idea of Wilde's guilt, was marked after the acquittal as "the detective who arrested the wrong man" and obtained no further preferment. Goodman is also perhaps the first writer about the case to note that Edward Theophilus Nelson, the barrister who defended Howard briefly and Wilde in his trial, was a black West Indian. Unfortunately the central mystery remains

mysterious. At the end of his survey Goodman suggests three possibilities: first, that Howard was the murderer, and his alibi faked or wrongly timed; second, that Wilde was guilty, since there were "many suspicious coincidences" involving him; third, that the German governess in the household of a friend might have been pregnant, that Storrs was the putative father and that this was the cause of the governess's suicide. The third solution, which involves a wholly conjectural visit to England made by a German member of the governess's family, is not worth consideration since there is no evidence to support it. Nor are any new facts introduced to buttress the cases against Howard and Wilde. What the jurors thought may be seen from the twenty and fifty minutes respectively that they took to acquit the two men. The cases against both were extremely weak, basically because neither was shown to have had any reason for killing Storrs. The nearest the author gets to a motive is a half-hearted suggestion that Howard might have been Storrs's illegitimate son, and in Wilde's case gossip related years later that Wilde's girl-friend had been sacked by Storrs from her job at his mill. Goodman is also led into the unlikely suggestion that the first attack was faked by Storrs himself with the complicity of his coachman, who committed suicide within a few days of his master's death.

One casts doubt on the reasoning, not the research. The author does not touch on the truly extraordinary behaviour of the four women in the house when the attack took place. They departed on their various missions leaving Storrs struggling with the intruder, and were away for so long that he had time to stab Storrs fifteen times and leave the scene before any of them returned. Most remarkable of all was Mrs Storrs's ringing of the alarm bell at the top of the house for nearly half an hour without coming back to help her husband. Why did she not come down, even when urged to do so by the police? Was it because she feared that he would reveal the skeleton in the closet? The skeleton in the closet, the mysterious stranger – the solution may lie in Holmesian regions after all.

Taking it seriously

Reginald Hill

ROBIN W. WINKS
Modus Operandi: An Excursion into Detective Fiction
131pp. Kudos and Godine, 45, Blackfriars Road, London. SE1 8NZ.
0879234067

Crime fiction is one of the novel's many poor relations. To get a fair hearing, it usually either advances hesitantly, slouches in hand, or cartwheels madly across the crystal floor. In *Modus Operandi*, Robin W. Winks tries a different approach, but almost stumbles at the start on a rough patch of justification. He is at great pains in Chapter One to explain that there is no attempt at a definitive study. It is what he calls "an excursion", in effect an extended Romantic essay, meandering easily from personal reminiscence to close argument, from gut-feeling to scholarship. The father of the form is Hazlitt. It is capable in the best hands of infinite subtleties of shape and function; it needs no special pleading. But Winks asserts that his excursion form is absolutely necessary to his chosen theme. His ground is that "to be serious... about detective fiction is beyond the bounds of most modern literary criticism", and he illustrates this by quoting hyperbolic claims (whether real or invented is not clear) which, while certainly daft enough to make us smile, seem too absurd to prove much more than the claimants' daftness. The ease with which Winks himself later lets Keats and Kipling, Johnson and James rub shoulders with Doyle and Deighton, Symons and Sayers, demonstrates that there is no automatic awkwardness in such associations.

On the other hand, there is certainly no need to turn a deaf ear when the bad-mouthing starts. Winks proves to be a very adept and stylish counter-puncher. Edmund Wilson, old-time heavyweight among the anti-criminals with his bludgeoning essay "Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?" is economically felled in Chapter Two, and two rounds later an easy points victory is gained over the flyweights of academic snobbery. But Winks is more than just a scrapper. His man down, he kneels beside him and urges him to understand what it is that made him provoke the fight in the first place. His analysis of the possible reasons for this need to keep detective fiction in its place is masterly, but best of all is the way he moves from justification to accusation. The usual glibes that the form is non-serious, rigid, popular, mediocre etc, he deals with easily. But then he writes, "perhaps the most important reason why detective fiction has not attracted more serious attention is that it frightens many people." What a telling shaft this is: when a man questions your taste, question his courage, and see who feels the deeper hurt! Winks's supporting arguments are not altogether convincing, but his heart is in the right place.

But this is not simply a partisan piece. The enemies within are severely dealt with, also. Graham Greene is taken to task for the downgrading implicit in labelling his thrillers "entertainments" and other crime novelists are mocked for labelling their thrillers "novels" as if this pushed them a few points upmarket. Later, the sharp reproofs administered to a pair of best-selling authors, one for idleness of research, the other for silliness of theme, remind us even more strongly that Winks is no mere chauvinist defender of the genre but, in his column in *The New Republic*, a perceptive and demanding reviewer of its artefacts. If anyone is going to damn us or defend us, then Winks is our man.

Yet a defence has to be positive too; not just a rebuttal of carpers, but an assertion of values. And herein lies the real value of *Modus Operandi*. This is a personal assessment, made with great authority. Winks moves easily through areas of psychological and sociological speculation; he demonstrates that large claims of function and association are admissible without absurdity; he differentiates sub-species of the genre; he evaluates individual authors. But above all the form permits him to talk directly, familiarly, even autobiographically, and to persuade not just by powerful argument but by conveying his own enthusiasm.

Within reasonable limits

Hugh Haughton

DONALD DAVIE
Collected Poems 1971-1983
172pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £5.95.
0856354627
GEORGE DEKKER (Editor)
Donald Davie and the Responsibilities of Literature
153pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £9.95.
085635466X

Donald Davie's *Collected Poems 1950-1970* began with a confident triptych of neo-classical lyrics which amounted, in effect, to a poetic manifesto for that energetic, publically accountable neo-classicism argued for in Davie's critical books, *Purity of Diction in English Verse* and *Articulate Energy*. As poet and critic Davie has thrived upon acts of public profession – he might be said to be, in contrast to his near contemporaries Lowell and Berryman, less a poetic confessor than a poetic professor – and he opened his poetic account in that first collection by declaring himself a "pasticheur of Late Augustan styles", a man whose "heart is not to be solicited"; he portrayed the Muse preferring a respectable marriage to Reason to the suspect attractions of romance. Now his *Collected Poems: 1971-83*, containing the three books he has produced since 1970 – *The Shires*, *In the Stopping Train* and *Three For Water Music* – plus a new work called *The Battered Wife and Other Poems*, starts off with a deceptively casual, formally loose reflective poem which is less a manifesto than an apology. It is subtitled "A poem of the 60's" and is a sympathetic psychological portrait of a beleaguered, judicious, but compromised public figure, who has stood up for rational, classical and late Augustan standards: Pilate.

The keeping up of standards (The right ones, Roman), how it sustained him once! The harm it does him, the practice of severity, which someone has to do, he knows. He knows it.

The reader knows that this is, at least in part, a self-portrait of the artist as a middle-aged professor – Davie has for decades as our most authoritative and wide-ranging critic of modern poetry administered more than poetic justice – and if the poem offers both a defence and expression of his critical authority, it also counts the cost both to himself and to human values. It was hard being an Augustan in the 1960s – and the depressing last hundred pages of Davie's first *Collected* confirms the poetic price he paid for becoming a hectoring reactionary ideologue: the winter talent grew positively glacial. "Pilate" as the frontispiece of his second *Collected* suggests a more sceptical, inward and self-questioning writer, even as it harks back to the political battles of his crisis years. Its tone of chastened puzzlement and sense of personal limitation in fact colour most of the best poems in the volume – marking not only a return to the brief puzzles and epiphanies of the earlier *Events* and *Wisdoms*, but an admirable capacity for self-renewal and self-criticism.

Davie has always been a poet of limits and limitations, but where in the past he could proclaim that "excellence is sparse" and plead for "an agreeable strictness", the present book reflects upon limitations with mordant and often poignant wit. A poem to his daughter under the Hardy-esque title "On Seeing Her Leave", after celebrating the classic ethos of the "civic" and "moralistic" architecture of London, ends on quite another note: "So much of the price is missed / In the tally of toll, ink, years / Count, neo-classicist, / The choking back of tears". A poem about a site of classical legend and epiphany ruefully admits that "some / Who missed the flash of a fit / Were keeping their eyes on rhyme-schemes". A love-poem concedes that "the diction kit begins to fall apart" and, more surprisingly, welcomes the fact ("High time it did, high time"). There's a whole poem devoted to a rather academic pastiche of Late Augustan style, making joke reference to the stock personifications of the Augustan lyric such as "Stout Labour" and "Old Sol" – in fact it's a reflective parody of Smart's "A Morning Piece" applied to a routine professional day – which ends with an exasperatedly double-edged and edgy plea:

"And that mob of ideas? Don't knock them. The sick pell-mell / Goes by the handsome Olympian name of Reason." The political quiescence of that "mob" named as "Reason" is a far cry from the moral imagination of "The Bride of Reason". Davie's neo-classicism looks distinctly battered – as at the personal level does his self-esteem as man and poet. A tough, self-mocking poem triggered by the cry of a screech-owl wryly admits: "In fact the birdcalls I / Can name are precious few. / Night-ingles sang to me / Once, and I never knew"; and acknowledges that his is "A gamut that remains / Indubitably scant".

But such incisive moments of self-criticism, with their chafing sense of self-imposed limitations, and their anxiety about the propriety of proper names, don't of course amount to palinodes. Their trim, sociable ethos, elegant concision, and very diction, proclaim and justify the scant gamut they in part lament. Davie says it is "high time" the diction kit fell apart, yet the poem finds a Beckettian dignity and touch of "high" diction in the cliché "high time" itself. The injunction to "count" the holding-back of tears both laments the high price of the neo-classical style and confirms the metrical habit of counting beats. If the birdcalls he can name are "precious few" they are clearly precious – as the language is precise. The collection shows Davie facing up to the narrowness of his emotional and technical range – most memorably in the self-lacerating *Doppelgänger* sequence "In the Stopping Train", with its probing portrait of "the man going mad inside" the skilled professional poet: "This journey will punish the bastard; / he'll have his flowering gardens / to stare at through the hot window; / words like 'laurel' won't help". "He never needed to see", says the speaker, "not with his art to help him". Yet this terrible account of a minor poet's impasse is, like Pound's *Maudsley* (a poem that goes on haunting Davie) a triumph of confident and rational art, a moral triumph over the humiliating limitations it perceives and satirizes. Recognizing the "scant gamut" has enabled jettisoning the ambitious exercises in public satire, Byronic verse-letters, large-scale narrative, and free-wheeling Don-like monologues such as "England", that engrossed and engulfed Davie's talent in the 1960s – but has given a new resonance to his exploration of his limited terrain, this time from within, and in a verse subtly gauged to catch the rhythms of a speaking voice, albeit an incorrigibly pedagogical one.

Davie has always favoured direct confrontation and the role of Plain Speaker, even while championing the great modernists against the infectious philistinism of his contemporaries Larkin and Amis. And though his public stance now seems less confidently assertive, the recent lyrics have lost none of the directness and aggressive terseness of his earlier work. They normally begin abruptly with an act of head-on confrontation that dramatizes a personal encounter with a place, friend, memento, name or event. Throughout the book the poet addresses his subjects with formal informality – he is a poet of address above all. His poems to fellow poets hail them with varying degrees of ceremony but with equal forthrightness: Thom Gunn as "Conquistador!", Mandelstam as "Russian Jew", and Seamus Heaney with a plain, curt "Heaney".

Names matter in and are the matter of Davie's poetry. There is scarcely a poem in this new collection which does not hinge in some way on the proper names of places or persons – or thematically upon the problems of proper naming. *The Shires*, published in 1974 when the shire-counties were being reorganized, is an act of nominal piety to the old county names in the form of a garrulous gazetteer of 8 to Y of the country, built up around personal association and reflective reminiscence based on the names of friends, family, and literary acquaintances. Though Davie has argued in many places for poetry of geography, the sequence is in no real sense a poem of place – only of place names. In the end, as the poem "Essex" asserts, "Names and things named don't match ever" – and the associations don't succeed in establishing a valid public reference. Too many names are dropped, too few caught: Worcester Pearmain, Spaghetti Junction, Saxon Mildas, a Daimler, Rose-bay willow herb, an Odeon, the Leicestershire Poetry Society. E-post.

Alley, the Via Gellia in Derbyshire, and Mr Auden, are a random sample.

If *The Shires* falls as a sequence, in the *Stopping Train* and *Three For Water Music*, which approach the problem of matching names and realities from opposite angles, but with comparable poetic intelligence and moral scepticism, seem to me eloquently successful in their distrust of poetic eloquence. This is from "The Fountain of Cynne": Sky-blue, dark-blue, sea-green, cerulean dyes Dye into tables what we hoped were lies And feared were truths. A happy turn, a word Says they are both and nothing untoward. Coloured by rhetoric, to die of grief. No chinking, retchings, not the same as dying Starved and worn out because you can't stop crying. Poet and critic here are, as so often when Davie is writing at his best, indistinguishable. The rhymed couplets catch something of Ovid's seductive force, as well as reaching back into the English tradition of Dryden, but they also undo the seduction of that mythologizing technique by a witty deflation that once again involves the neo-classicist in counting tears, and fighting out an argument between poetry and truth to plain experience.

In "Spring Song", "Widowers", "At Seur, Near Blois", "Portland", "Father the Cavalier", "Seeing Her Leave", "Screech-Owl" – and in the two, extended imitations of Ronsard, "A Garland for Ronsard" and "Summer Lightning" – Davie has written reflective, personal lyrics, which meditate on human and poetic imperfection in an idiom which, like Ben Jonson's, while drawing on the classical traditions of English poetry, articulates an energetic, stiffly plain, learnedly argumentative, but vulnerable ethos. However personal, they speak for a predicament which is more than that. With the exception of "Pilate" and the letter to Heaney, it is not the civic or public poems that impress – Davie's Anglican lady, Christian hero, heroic admirals and Town-end are frankly boring, and his version of Ronsard's "Antres, et vout fontaines" is too primly Augustan to be a fair version of the great *tombeau* the French poet designed for himself. But "A Spring Song", one of the gems of the collection, shows the winter talent bending both the *Provençal Primavera* convention and his Augustan "diction kit" to accommodate the "truth" of the love of the poet and his wife, a pair of middle-aged tourists in France: Spring pricks a little. I get out the maps. Time to demoralize my song, high time. Vernal a little. Primavera. First Green, first truth and last. High time, high time.

If the repentant moralist is parodying himself here in this comic Beckettian monologue, as he "demoralizes" his song, he is patently not demoralized – and the poem finally redeems the promise of its Augustan epigraph: "Stooping to truth, we potter to Montoire / High time my love, high time and a long time yet."

Donald Davie and the Responsibilities of Literature, edited by George Dekker, is more a scholarly tribute than a guide to Davie's work, but makes a welcome and informative companion to the second *Collected Poems*. The ten contributors provide a kind of respectful joint report on Davie in mid-career, but don't try to build up a picture of his career as a whole (there is no reference to his early association with *The Movement* or his later involvement with *PN Review*, for example) or examine his work in its wholeness (poet and critic are uniquely integrated in Davie). Though many of the critical essays address themselves to central concerns of his writing, none effectively confronts the central business of assessing his achievement to date, or locating it within the context of contemporary poetry (other modern poets barely rate a mention). What the book lacks in fact are just those qualities of abrasive clarity and energetic judgement which one values in Davie's own criticism of contemporary poetry.

Though a slim book, it covers quite a lot of ground. There are substantial general essays on Davie's Christianity and politics by Gregory Schirmer and Robert van Hallberg, and thematic accounts of his poetic portrayal of Ireland (a neglected aspect this, beautifully treated by Augustine Martin) and eighteenth-century England (obviously central to his aesthetic programme and his reading of British culture, as Howard Erskine-Hill shows).

Curiously there is no comparable exploration of "English and American in Donald Davie", a glaring omission, since this is a major pre-occupation of both his verse and criticism. There are, however, two detailed and suggestive studies of his vexed treatment of those antithetical modern masters, Pound and Pasternak, touchstones of his own poetic vocation, and a lively, factual piece on Davie in the role of modern master himself, as he conducts that most un-English of academic occasions, the (Graduates Only) Creative Writing Class. In addition to these fairly straightforward academic contributions, Charles Tomlinson has written a poem "Instead of an Essay", spelling out what Davie has meant to him as a poet, and Hugh Kenner a provocatively irresponsible essay-indeed-of-a-poem, entitled "Responsibilities", praising Davie as an instance of "the English talent for the Representative Career" and comparing him to Cardinal Newman (America being to Davie what Rome was to Newman). Oddly, there is only one study of an individual book of Davie's, Dana Gioia's contribution on *The Shires*. Since this has nothing to say about the poetry itself, and indeed only quotes from the sequence once, it doesn't stand a chance of making good its implausible claim that *The Shires* is his "most complex book of poems" or "one of the most fascinating and successful long poems in English" since *Briggflatts*.

The best essays give us close readings of the poems themselves. Outstanding is Angela Livingstone's on Davie's creative dialogue with Pasternak during the period of *Events* and *Wisdoms*, giving a persuasive account of what drew Davie to Pasternak, a "vigorous speaking, rather than singing voice" and his "sober and life-knowing finality", as well as what Pasternak drew out of him, in translation and imitation, and also in Davie's original poems such as the marvellous "Hill Field". Bernard Bergonzi adds to our understanding of Davie's bewilderingly fluctuating judgments on Pound in his criticism, arguing that Pound is like a "cardiograph" of the later poet's attitude to his own vocation. Augustine Martin's subtle, close-up discussion of Davie's contradictory poems for and against Ireland, "Ireland of the Bombers" and "1977, Near Mullingar", both in the new *Collected*, shows how, even in recoil from Irish politics, Davie pays conscious tribute to Irish art, with his artful use of Celtic metrical devices learned from Austin Clarke – an admirable demonstration of Davie's capacity to learn from others' virtues and his own mistakes.

The general essays too depend on the quality of their particular perception. Gregory Schirmer not only gives a useful account of Davie's progress from Yorkshire Dissenter to American Episcopalian after twenty years of vacillating between "agnosticism and extremely tepid Anglicanism" (sic), but demonstrates the effects of these changes on and in the poetry itself – as he abandons the "literary" irony of early poems like "Dissenting Voice" for the devotional and doctrinally anchored religious lyrics of the new *Collected*, such as "Living-hayes". Robert van Hallberg, offering queerly implausible readings of the poems and an equally implausible account of Davie's political position, sees the "pull to the right" as the "occupational hazard" of the "Liberal poet", without seeing that this is drastically damaging to both Davie and the Liberal stance he praises – in fact this approach misreads and ignores the content of too many poems.

Kenner, in putting Davie forward as an instance of a "Representative Career" portrays him as an embodiment of the strains of a culture in which literary criticism and poetry have taken over the burdens properly borne by theology. "Languages", he says, "should not be agonised over like Christianities." We are back here with Davie's anxiously judicious Pilate, keeping up his standards. Davie's attempt to make poetry and criticism bear these strains is, in its uncomfortable way, exemplary.

The latest issue (No 3) of *Oxford Poetry* contains ten previously unpublished undergraduate poems by W. H. Auden, as well as interviews with Sir Stephen Spender and with Terry Eagleton (by Paul Hamilton). Copies may be had from the Editor, *Oxford Poetry*, Magdalen College, Oxford, at £1.25 each.

Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

GLADYS MITCHELL
No Winding-Sheet
208pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
071823999

Gladys Mitchell died at her home in Dorset last July after completing *No Winding-Sheet*, her sixty-sixth crime novel. *Speedy Death*, her first book, appeared in 1929. It's a lively, eccentric murder story, whose flavour is conveyed by the fact that the first corpse is that of a well-known, virile explorer who, when discovered drowned in a bath, turns out to be a woman. Mrs (later Dame) Beatrice Adela Lestrangé Bradley, that famous psychiatrist with the appearance of a sinister pterodactyl and a Cheshire Cat smile, makes her first appearance here, becoming perhaps the only fictional detective to be tried and acquitted for a murder which she has in fact committed. Later she acquires a secretary, the attractive, athletic and muscular Laura Menzies, who marries a policeman, and as Laura Gavin, is still helping the ageing Dame Beatrice in the last novel.

All Gladys Mitchell's books are marked by a spiced originality, all are written in a spiky, witty, pellucid style which led one critic to term her the Ivy Compton-Burnett of the detective story. The earliest are perhaps rather too irreverent and outré; the best are probably those of the late 1930s and 1940s, particularly those stories set in a school or other educational establishment. *Liquors are Polton*, *When Loui Died*, *Sunrise over Soho*, *The Rising of the Moon* and *Tony Brown's Body*, for example. More lately the supernatural – always likely to put in an appearance – has been occupying perhaps too large a place, and the plots seemed to have lost some of their bite.

No Winding-Sheet happily returns to the school theme. That of the St George's boarding

school for boys in a town not far from Southampton. Mr Pythias, the geography master, has disappeared, and with him have vanished several thousand pounds collected to pay for a school trip to Greece. Dame Beatrice, bringing a psychologist's mind to bear on essays written by boys in a lower form, soon sorts the matter out. If it is not one of Gladys Mitchell's best books, it still preserves many of her characteristics; and, like all her novels, could be by no-one else; it is unmistakably hers.

LESLIE CHARTERIS
Salvage for the Saint
191pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £7.95.
0340334975

Leslie Charteris wrote his first Saint novel in 1930; now, half a century later, here is the fiftieth. Simon Templar is as handsome, lithe and debonair as ever; once more he's engaged in his favourite pursuit of doing down the ungodly; this time over a cargo of gold bullion at the bottom of the Mediterranean. As always, there's a beautiful damsel in distress; and, as always, a good selection of sinister villains. Though the aficionado must prefer the pre-war stories, it can't be denied that the later books don't show many more signs of age than the hero himself. They're still inventive, brisk and cheerful, and go down as easily – and to as much effect – as one of the Saint's patent cocktails.

GEORGE HARDINGE (Editor)
Winter's Crimes 15
190pp. Macmillan. £6.95.
0333350421

This year's edition of Macmillan's annual collection of crime short stories in no way lets down the high tradition established by its predecessors. As before, each story has been specially written for the season. It's 15 James' The Cat with a Velvet Bowtie is the best

chilling, and Peter Whalley's "My Love, I Could Never Leave You" possibly the most ingenious; there is also a beautifully written Victorian pastiche from Celia Dale, a neat spy anecdote from Anthony Price, a pleasing account of a mysterious feline from Antonia Fraser, and a good joke from H. R. F. Keating. And six others.

RAY WALSH
The Mycroft Memoranda
186pp. Deutsch. £7.95.
0233975829

In his first novel Ray Walsh has tried his hand at an old theme: Sherlock Holmes meets Jack the Ripper. Things begin well, with the two inhabitants of 221B Baker Street recovering from their recent sojourn at Baskerville Hall – there's a whiff or two of the authentic Watson about the description here. But all too soon Holmes is revealed as an imposter, without the intellectual weight of the original; and the plot sinks deeper and deeper into a Crimpen Mire of confusion from which it can't even be reached by Lord John Roxton, making a guest appearance on loan from *The Lost World*.

EMMA PAGE
Cold Light of Day
196pp. Collins. £6.75.
0 00 231382 0

Rich young businesswoman is found in the bedroom of his desirable country residence with a knife sticking out of his back. The crime is investigated by Detective Chief Inspector Kelvey and Sergeant Lambert. A story in the old-fashioned mould, but an exceedingly good one, with a well-defined, provincial, back-pounding, solid and interesting characters, and a subtly misleading narrative. The only jarring note is that the author's name is Emma Page, not Ray Walsh.

Survivors and their stories

E. J. Kenney

L. D. REYNOLDS (Editor)
Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics
509pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £32.50.
019814563

"I am not very fond of feeding on the dust of libraries, and I know very well that there are others who can sort out this kind of thing with much greater ease and accuracy." My own sympathy with this frank avowal – by Wilamowitz, no less – enhances my admiration for the virtues of this book, an object-lesson in the transmutation of dust into gold. It is offered as an eightieth birthday tribute to Sir Roger Mynors by friends and former students, *quorum pars antiquitatis fui* – though myself something of an *Idle Apprentice*. L. D. Reynolds and his colleagues are to be thanked and congratulated for producing a Festschrift which is at once the aptest possible recognition of all that Sir Roger, by his work and his teaching, has achieved and caused others to achieve in this field, and, what is not true of all or indeed most Festschriften, will be for years to come an indispensable tool for scholars and students.

It replaces, at least in part and for Latin texts, F. W. Hall's invaluable but long-antiquated *Companion to Classical Texts* (1913) and covers (to quote the Preface) "all authors and texts down to Apuleius which had their own independent transmission" with "a generous selection of later authors who might be regarded for one reason or another as belonging to the classical tradition". It would be unreasonable to cavil about details, more especially as the selection is nearly thirty per cent larger than Hall's; but it is a pity that room could not be found for one text of extraordinary interest and importance, the *Digest*. We begin arrestingly with the *Agrimensores*: "Every schoolboy knows that the Romans were a practical people, but not every schoolboy knows what they did with a *grona*." So M. D. Reeve, who is responsible, singly or jointly, for almost a third of the volume and whose *obiter dicta* at times offer to steal the show, as when he writes that "Friedrich's edition [of the *Topica*] and its twentieth-century descendants have the same air of improvisation as the work itself, which Cicero wrote from memory on board ship."

Hard words; but it is salutary to be reminded, as one is on nearly every page of this book, of how much still remains to be done in this fundamental area of humane learning and how many Latin writers have not yet had their texts – let alone their textual histories – satisfactorily established. These discussions abound in pointers to neglected problems and suggestions for promising research topics. Did the archetype of Avianus' manuscripts call him that, or Avianus? Who will bring order into the confusion of *Florus*' text? Who will produce a stemma for Asconius that holds water, as the current one does not? Hyginus' *Astronomica* cannot even boast a reliable list of manuscripts, never mind an adequate edition. Even in the tradition of Lucretius, whose stemma "has long been one of the great show-pieces of classical scholarship" (Reynolds, p. 218), loose ends persist. In that connexion, by the way, the editor may have missed an opportunity, for according to Friedrich Leo a textbook case of a closed recension is offered by Venantius Fortunatus.

Fresh material continues to emerge from the libraries. It is now calculated that there are probably in existence some 650 medieval manuscripts of Terence; the current published estimate is 450. A new discovery may solve a problem – it may compound it. A vexed question in the transmission of Valerius Flaccus was elegantly and definitively settled between one Teubner edition (1970) and the next (1980) by the surfacing of Pollian's long-lost second *Micellaneorum Centuria*. Fate was also kind (Reynolds, p. 175) when it arranged that the author of nine elegiac verses rescued from a rubbish-heap in Egyptian Nubia in 1978 should be identified by the name Lycoris in the first line; but after that a sense of humour took over. High art is in the air. It is not that the works of Seneca, which were most popular with ancient readers, that have come down to us,

Salustius' *Historiae*, widely read in antiquity, survived in a fifth-century copy, only to be cut up for binding and palimpsesting around AD 700. Had that copy hung on unnoticed for another hundred years students would not have to form their opinions of Salustius from the *Cailline* and the *Jugurtha*. Quintus Serenus' *Liber medicinalis*, on the other hand, recommended neither by utility nor literary merit, got a lift on the Carolingian bandwagon and lives on, unhonoured and unread. When chance is benign or neutral, human frailty has stepped in. Even in the late sixteenth century and with material as sensational (one would have thought) as new bits of Petronius, distinguished scholars were communicating their discoveries in a fashion guaranteed to keep their successors puzzling away happily to this day.

What fraction we now possess of all the Latin books written in classical antiquity is probably past all conjecture. Many had disappeared or were no longer accessible well before the beginning of the Dark Ages. Attrition was gradual. Some texts now lost were still in circulation somewhere in the Western Empire as late as the early sixth century; Reynolds in his introductory survey lists known examples, and there must have been many others. Then, abruptly, around 550 the curtain falls: "the copying of classical texts tapered off to such an extent that the continuity of pagan culture came close to being severed."

Rescue came by what verges on a miracle; for the Carolingian Revival is easier to describe than to explain. Under the aegis of Charlemagne there took place about the year 800 what Reynolds calls the "upturn" – a change of attitude as sudden as that which 250 years before had nearly cut the lifeline. Before 800 any pagan texts that found their way from Italy to

the great monasteries of the North were apt to be prized for their parchment rather than their contents. So it befell with Salustius, and with other important copies of Pliny, Ovid and Livy whose fragments have been retrieved and studied. After 800 came a dramatic change; at its centre, as Bernard Bischoff has shown, was the court of Charlemagne and a number of monasteries associated with it. By 900 the bulk of Latin texts still available had been located and recopied in the beautiful hand from which our printed roman letter descends. Some discoveries remained to reward later investigators, but little recopied in that crucial century was subsequently lost. The lion's share, some two-thirds, of extant ninth-century manuscripts of Latin classical texts were copied in the monasteries of what is now France. Germany and Italy also contributed, but the example and the stimulus were French.

Thereafter the story becomes too complicated and ramifying to summarize. Reynolds pursues it, with economy and lucidity, down to the second great Revival of the Italian Renaissance and the arrival on the scene of the printed book; and the catalogue takes up the tale author by author. Stephen Leacock dismissed conventional laments for the disappearance of so much classical literature as humbug. "When I reflect that I have openly expressed regret, as a personal matter, even in the presence of women, for the missing books of Tacitus . . . I can find no words in which to beg for pardon . . . I believe all scholars lie like this." Well, it is true that if we possessed autograph copies of all of Galus or Livy or Tacitus a good deal of the fun and excitement of scholarship would be lost. It is no accident that dons delight in detective fiction or that one of the favourite recreations of M. R. James was the jigsaw puzzle.

That indeed is part of the fascination of this book. Huge as is the number of damaged or missing pieces, the main lines of the picture emerge. Through the laborious spadework of scholars like Mynors and Bischoff and the contributors to this volume the reader glimpses a lost world – the Europe evoked in one of Kipling's unforgettable landscapes: "church upon church, monastery upon monastery, cell after cell, and the bulk of a great cathedral moored on the edge of the banked shoals of sunset". This was the loom on which was woven the vast web of intellectual and artistic interconnections whose filaments are here painstakingly traced and unravelled. There are the materials here for a wonderful conspectus of Western medieval culture. These are the grass roots of our modern intellectual history.

This book is a massive reminder of the truth of Lachmann's dictum, that to establish a text in accordance with its tradition is a strictly historical undertaking. It is not always the case that textual history impinges decisively or even effectively on the editing process, but that is not really the point. Textual criticism is ultimately not about emendation or even reconstruction, but interpretation. These studies do not merely provide a technical training for the future professional; properly conducted they nourish the historical sense and the imagination. I have forgotten (I know he will not mind the admission) most of what Professor Mynors, as he then was, told us in 1949 about the textual problems of Horace's Odes, but I shall remember to my dying day his intonation when he referred to Bernensis 363 – "that extraordinary book". *Maxima debetur libro reverentia*: not a bad slogan as we all enter, eagerly or reluctantly as the case may be, the age of data processing and information retrieval.

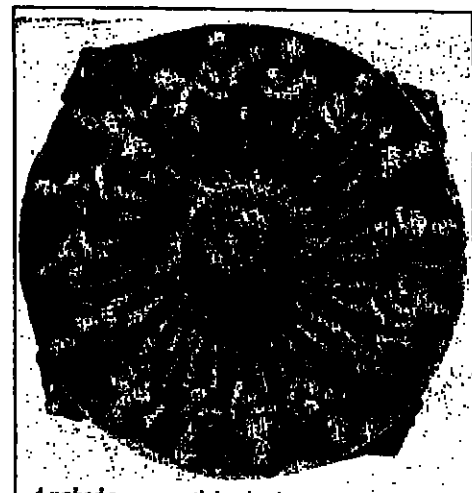
Ideal subjects

Henry Chadwick

PATRICIA COX
Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man
166pp. University of California Press. £21.25.
0520046129

For the period of the later Roman Empire we have no Plutarch or Suetonius, but quite a number of biographies and autobiographies: panegyrics of emperors living and dead, lives of sophists, philosophers, ascetics, and bishops, and portrayals of heroes of the moral and spiritual life. The ideological conflict between polytheism and Christianity in the third century AD led writers on both sides of the divide to paint verbal portraits of their ideal figures, men who specially guided humanity on the authentic path to God. Neopythagoreans and Neoplatonists wrote idealizing Lives of Pythagoras and of Apollonius of Tyana, concerning whom there was a double tradition – one representing him as a deep philosopher, the other as a magician. For the third-century pagans, both men were possessed of a divine nature, whose power then communicated to mortals through miracles or inspired prophecy, through ascetic withdrawal from society and yet a generous sharing of their wisdom with frail, blind humanity.

Porphyry wrote not only a Life of the semi-divine Pythagoras but also a Life of Plotinus, his attractively human but also enigmatic teacher at Rome. Admittedly the biographer of Plotinus (like other biographers since) was quite as interested in impressing on the reader his own importance in the charmed circle as in describing the awe which his extraordinary master induced, at least in his inner circle of disciples. Porphyry wanted everyone to know how right so great a man had been to entrust him with the arranging and editing of his treatises; how profoundly Plotinus had admired both his acuteness in criticism and his capacity for inspired ecstatic verse; and how at the age of sixty-eight Porphyry himself had once attained the experience of mystical union which came only four times in his life even to the divinely inspired Plotinus. Porphyry's picture of Plotinus is one of a very special genius, whose mind never relaxed its concentration on intellectual and spiritual heights, and whose



A naked group participating in a ceremony, possibly of the serpent-worshipping gnostic cult of the Ophites, depicted on an alabaster bowl of the third to fifth centuries from Syria or Asia Minor; reproduced from Kurt Rudolph's *Gnosis: The Nature and History of an Ancient Religion* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), to be reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

guardian spirit was no inferior power.

Plotinus is described as living on the minimum of food and sleep, given to vegetarianism and no baths. He was ashamed of his body and never celebrated his birthday, though glad to celebrate the annual festivities in honour of Plato and Socrates. Fascinated in youth by the esoteric Neopythagoreanism of Ammonius Saccas, whom Porphyry elsewhere describes as a former Christian, Plotinus shared the yearning for Persian and Indian wisdom ascribed to Apollonius of Tyana. He hated the syncretistic gnostics and their irrational mumbo-jumbo, but himself stood so close to the pagan gnosticism taught by Numenius of Apamea a generation before, that his pupil Amelius had to vindicate his originality and independence. To his numerous male and female pupils Plotinus became a father-figure. The rich entrusted their children to his guardianship. Like many an ancient bishop, he used to arbitrate in disputes, and those who tried to lie in his presence suffered an emotional stress which he could detect. His disapproval seemed preternatural. Ultimately he was honoured by the emperor Gallienus and his wife.

The Christian Origen was some years older than Plotinus. Eusebius of Caesarea made his

life of this masterful intellectual a high point in the apologetic of his *Church History*. He too had sat at the feet of Ammonius. He is depicted as enjoying divine inspiration, so ascetic that he lived on almost no food and sleep; and he sacrificed his precious library to forgo all possessions. He too was accused (by Porphyry) of plagiarizing Numenius and vigorously opposed gnosticism. He had a distinguished list of male and female pupils and a lengthy catalogue of writings. He attracted imperial interest. His writings (not Eusebius) mention with disapprobation the holding of birthday parties. Whereas in Plotinus' Life the supreme awe attaches to his mystical experiences, in Origen's biography this place is taken by martyrdom.

Patricia Cox of Syracuse University has had the good idea of offering some critical comparison of the pagan and Christian biographies, and rightly observes that both Porphyry and Eusebius were more interested in the ideal than the actual. She does not think there is a lot of fiction in their works. Both selected those features which would bring out the utterly exceptional character and inspiration of their heroes. It would have been interesting if she had made more comments than she does about the potential rivalry between the two biographers. Eusebius' Origen is as great a sage as any the pagan world can offer. Porphyry's Plotinus is a religious figure even closer to the divine than any Christian known to Porphyry would hope to claim. Dr Cox becomes difficult to follow when she introduces concepts and vocabulary with Jungian associations, none of which seems very important in her thesis – except that it wraps some passages in mist and occasionally encourages her to write sentences that add up to little. The volume is the fifth in the good series, "The Transformation of the Classical Heritage", edited by Peter Brown.

In *Vindolanda: The Latin Writing Tablets* A. K. Bowman and J. D. Thomas (157pp, with 15 plates, Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 31 Gordon Square, London: WC1H 0PP, £16.50, 0 907764 02 9) reconstruct and discuss the texts of the earliest assemblage of written material found in Britain (c. 80–125 AD), contributing significantly to knowledge of the use of leaves of wood for writing and of the Old Roman Cursive hand.

Scrambling and poaching

Michael Crowder

DARRELL BATES
The Fashoda Incident of 1898: Encounter on the Nile
194pp. Oxford University Press. £15.
0192117718

November 1984 will mark the centenary of the West Africa Conference in Berlin which established the rules for the conduct of the European Scramble for Africa (even though it was already well under way). Given their ignorance of the continent they were so arrogantly partitioning, it is surprising that the colonial powers concerned never actually clashed in their rush to acquire vast tracts of the African interior. On only two occasions did the troops of rival powers, in both cases the French and British, seem likely to precipitate conflict: on the Niger in Borgu in the early months of 1898, and on the Nile at Fashoda in the summer of that same year. Significantly both incidents took place on major navigable rivers: a main concern of the colonial powers at Berlin had been to ensure free access to these waterways, since until railways could be built they would provide the principal means of communication in Africa.

On the Niger, Britain was determined to deny France a port on its navigable stretch below the rapids near the Borgu town of Bussa. Likewise, Britain, while still in occupation of Egypt, was not prepared to entertain the prospect of French control of the Upper Nile and made it clear that any attempt to achieve it would constitute "an unfriendly act" which could lead to war. Nevertheless the French sent off expeditions with the object of occupying Fashoda, some 600 kilometres up the White Nile from Khartoum. This could give France's Equatorial African estate access by river to the Mediterranean, help realize her ambition of possessing a continuous band of territory from Dakar to Djibouti and thwart Rhodes's vision of a British railroad from the Cape to Cairo. But, from the British point of view, as Sir Darrell Bates emphasizes in his clear and well-written account of the events leading up to the Fashoda "crisis", it would place under the control of a potentially hostile power the upper reaches of the Nile, the lifeblood of Egypt and Sudan, where Britain saw her interests as dominant.

Fashoda was an abandoned Egyptian fort in the territory of the Shilluk, whose ruler paid tribute to the Sudanese Mahdist state. The French considered that, in terms of the rules laid down for the Scramble, the region was *res nullius*, that it belonged to no one and would become the property of the first European power to occupy it.

After a number of unsuccessful French expeditions, from 1894 onwards, Fashoda was finally reached on July 10, 1898, by that led by Captain Marchand. It is this expedition which is the focus of Bates's study. While the Fashoda crisis in the chancelleries of Europe has been the subject of much discussion by historians, the story of Marchand's mission of a handful of European officers and NCOs, a company of Senegalese soldiers and locally recruited porters, and its dramatic 3,500 km journey from the mouth of the Congo to Fashoda, has not been told in detail in English before. It is a tale every bit as thrilling as those of better-known explorers such as Park and Livingstone, and Bates tells it exceedingly well, with the aid of the relevant French and British archives as well as the accounts written by some of the participants. Indeed it is hard to interrupt reading as we follow Marchand and his party along the rivers and through the forests of the Congo, into the Sudd, where the party were by day often knee-deep in stinking ooze with their vision obscured by reeds; and by night besieged by mosquitoes. Much of the land they passed through was unknown to Europeans, and once Marchand had moved out of the territorial jurisdiction of the High Commissioner of French Equatorial Africa he signed his reports as coming from a completely new territory called "Afrique Centrale Française".

When his party finally reached Fashoda, after beating off two attacks by the Mahdists, he signed a treaty of protection with the Reth of the Shilluk as acting High Commissioner for the French Government in the upper Nile and the Bahr el Ghazal.

His triumph was short-lived. No matter that he had reached Fashoda before his British and Belgian rivals, who had abandoned their expeditions, or that he had preceded the two other French missions launched from the Horn of Africa. To the north, Kitchener and his huge Anglo-Egyptian army was bearing down on the Mahdist state. In early September he occupied Khartoum, and two weeks later arrived at Fashoda where, with superior forces, he formally protested at the French presence on Egyptian and British-protected soil. He departed leaving a battalion of Sudanese infantry under British officers opposite the French occupied fort.

At that point the French government was ignorant of Marchand's occupation of Fashoda. News of it came through Kitchener, who deliberately underplayed Marchand's strength and reserves. These false reports were fed to the French government and, despite a jingoistic outcry, it was no more prepared to become involved in hostilities with Britain now than it had been a few months earlier over Borgu – which despite its obvious parallels with and relevance to the Fashoda crisis surprisingly gains no mention in Bates's book. The apparent weakness of Marchand's position persuaded France to yield to British demands that Marchand evacuate Fashoda. Rather than suffer the humiliation of returning to France by the short route through Cairo, courtesy of the British, Marchand chose the longer, arduous route via Ethiopia. The failure of the French government to support him was a bitter blow, and his heroic expedition as a result belongs to the marginalia of the history of the Scramble. But we are fortunate that Darrell Bates has recreated so vividly both the journey and the international context in which it was undertaken.

Jobs for the gentry

John Ure

RAYMOND A. JONES
The British Diplomatic Service 1815–1914
258pp. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe. £13.50.
0861401093

In 1858, John Bright told a Birmingham audience that British diplomacy was "neither more nor less than a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy". There was a good deal of evidence to support his contention. Although during the first 200 years of the resident embassy – which was itself a product of the emerging nation-states of Renaissance Europe – it was acceptable that diplomats should be clerics or lawyers, by the late seventeenth century it had become the accepted wisdom that aristocrats were the best representatives at foreign courts. The practice of so employing them persisted, and at the time Bright was speaking 52 per cent of the British diplomatic service were from the landed gentry. Their approach to their patrician calling was – at times – decidedly languid: Labouchere, for instance, was to be found remonstrating at about this time that he could adequately fulfil his diplomatic obligations in Buenos Aires from his residence in Baden-Baden.

It is the great merit of Raymond A. Jones's book that he challenges Bright's too-readily-accepted contention with a mass of historical data; he succeeds in integrating the story of the diplomatic service into the overall history of the Victorian public service in Britain. He starts by demonstrating that the composition of the early nineteenth-century diplomatic service was, in fact, no more upper-class than that of the public service as a whole. The House of Commons in the 1840s consisted of 72 per cent aristocrats and landed gentry, as opposed to the 66 per cent of those classes in the diplomatic service; the aristocratic content of the Cabinet was even higher – as the century progressed – the pattern was much the same among under-secretaries in the Home Civil Service. Indeed, compared to some diplomatic services – notably the Prussian – the British service seemed positively plebeian.

Dr Jones traces the history of the "family embassy", at which the attachés and secretaries were usually relatives of the ambassador

Keeping the Empire going

Zara Steiner

PAUL KENNEDY
Strategy and Diplomacy 1870–1945: Eight Studies
254pp. Allen and Unwin. £15.
004 9102072

Relatively few contemporary historians write for both their fellow practitioners and for the more general reader. Paul Kennedy, a historian who is thoroughly familiar with the monographic literature in his field published in English and German, attempts to satisfy both audiences. These loosely connected and wide-ranging essays, most of which have already appeared in scholarly journals, illustrate his striking capacity to consider the broader questions raised by a mass of new and detailed research.

The three most challenging surveys consider Britain's world role in the modern period. In a general discussion of appeasement, Kennedy stresses the lines of continuity in British foreign policy between 1865 and 1939 and argues that for the most part the course of peace and conciliation best served Britain's internal and external national interests. Not only was appeasement the dominant theme in British diplomacy but its critics, both to the right and left, the "realists" and "idealists", repeatedly returned to the same counter-arguments in their efforts to discredit or reverse this central tradition. A second essay, "Why did the British Empire last so long?", is a timely and necessary challenge to the imperial morphologists. By reversing the terms of the usual question, Kennedy underlines the positive aspects of British rule and analyses the sources of public support which delayed imperial disintegration and

and invariably ate at his table. Ironically, it was a row within one such embassy – Constantinople in 1860 – that led to the breakup of the system and the introduction, along with other overdue reforms, of such novel concepts as career prospects and on-the-job training for entrants to the diplomatic service (although it was several decades before these aspirants were able to escape the drudgery of spending many of their formative years copying out despatches in the clear, round hand so much admired by Lord Palmerston). But from 1860 onwards, professionalism was no longer to be considered an embarrassingly vulgar concept.

In considering the role of communications, Jones is meticulous in explaining the circuits of Queen's Messengers, but gives little hint of the hazards to which these intrepid travellers were exposed: there is no mention here, for instance, of the fact that in the year in which his narrative starts (1815) alone, one QM was murdered in Madrid and another had both his feet amputated after frost-bite. But, like all historians of diplomacy, Jones attaches great significance to the introduction of the electric telegraph. He rightly sees this as indicating a shift in power in favour of Ministers and Foreign Office officials in London at the expense of the ambassadors in the field; but he falls into the trap of overlooking the fact that the telegraph has always been a two-way system. The ambassador can and does use it to give advice to London while his instructions are still in the formative stage, and to comment on and even challenge bad instructions in a way which was not possible for the pre-telegraph plenipotentiary ambassador. "Theirs not to reason why" has never been part of the British diplomatic code of practice.

This is a severely academic work, and in fact a companion volume to the author's *The Nineteenth Century Foreign Office*. But even Dr Jones finds it impossible to write about diplomacy without some recourse to anecdote. This reviewer felt particular sympathy for the young secretary at the Paris embassy who was sent across a crowded soirée by his ambassador to enquire the name of an unidentified guest, only to be informed by the distinguished Marquis whom he had accosted that his impertinence would have to be answered for at a duel the following morning. It is not only Queen's Messengers who face hazards in the diplomatic service.

saved the mother country from the more cataclysmic effects of separation. It can certainly be argued that British statesmen often found far more aggressive and morally questionable means to preserve their dominion than are outlined here and that the price paid by both ruler and ruled was higher than Kennedy suggests.

A third attempt at a general synthesis, "Strategy versus Finance in Twentieth Century Britain", deals with a subject of increasing scholarly interest. Britain's present economic weakness has alerted historians to the influence of financial considerations in dictating past diplomatic and strategic options. Well before the First World War, Britain's world-wide interests and responsibilities were far greater than the resources her leaders could devote to their maintenance. It was not only her dependence on invisible earnings to cover her balance-of-trade deficits that made the country peculiarly vulnerable to the shock of war. In ways not explored here, financial considerations determined the size of the projected expeditionary force, influenced the course of the naval rivalry with Germany, contributed to the strengthening of the entente policies and, as David French has convincingly argued, encouraged preparations for war which left the country totally unprepared for the conflict which followed. Kennedy treats the inter-war period in somewhat greater detail. The need to bridge the gap between strategic requirements and financial and industrial resources provided a rational argument for appeasement and gave the Treasury a dominant voice in the determination of defence priorities, often in opposition to the demands of the service chiefs.

As this essay makes clear, it was in the period between Munich and Prague, when the government was abandoning appeasement, that the most glaring dichotomy between Britain's strategic and economic aims emerged. The country did not have the necessary resources to win a long war of attrition, the only one the Chiefs of Staff thought they were capable of winning. Despite the impressive production figures of 1939–40, only Lend-Lease, borrowings from Canada and the Belgian government-in-exile, and repeated injections of American financial and material aid enabled Britain to sustain its role in checking Hitler's Germany.

This thought-provoking paper raises questions that go far beyond its central thesis. Were there not, during the first half of this century, other options, economic, strategic or diplomatic, that would have left Britain in a less exposed position? There is a tendency among historians to stress the inevitability of British decline and to praise those who faced the realities of her weakness rather than those few who sought to reverse the tide. It may be possible, starting from Kennedy's premises, to arrive at a more critical view of the policy-makers than is commonly current.

The remaining essays in this volume on strategic issues, "Mahan versus Mackinder: Two Interpretations of British Sea Power", "Fisher and Tirpitz Compared" and "Strategic Aspects of the Anglo-German Naval Race", all deal with themes discussed in far greater detail in Kennedy's earlier books and by others working on similar topics. It says a great deal about the rate of scholarly production that some of the arguments presented here, like about the Kaiser's *Flottenpolitik* and the British choice of strategies, need to be debated in the light of works published since the first appearance of these pieces. An essay on "Japanese Strategic Decisions, 1929–45" was undoubtedly more useful when first published as part of Purnell's *History of the Second World War*. The remaining essay, on "Arms-races and the Causes of War, 1850–1945", introduces a subject for inquiry where theoreticians and historians might well collaborate to their mutual benefit. History does not repeat itself but there are, none the less, important conclusions to be drawn from the study of earlier arms-races and attempts at disarmament. Too often statesmen learn the wrong lessons of the past: there are also right ones.

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Eric Korn

It hasn't been a bad month, all things considered (things like *The Desert a City* by Derwas K. Chitty; *La Vie Sexuelle* par Auguste Forel; *Marriage in the Melting Pot* by George Ryley Scott), but the recent sale by Sotheby's of five lots of blank paper — granted, ornately blank paper, glittering green and gold, used for binding eighteenth-century children's books (I mean used in the eighteenth century for binding children's books, of course, nothing else) has once again prodded me into semi-furious rumination about the motives of collectors of books and auxiliary materials.

Love of literature has nothing to do with it: people who collected cellos because they liked listening to cello concertos would be rightly judged to have seized hold of the wrong end of the stick, bow or baton; while if I said that I was partial to a bit of Brahms played by an Oistrakh or two, but what I really specialized in was lumps of raw vulcanite, that I was so passionately fond of having my ear ravished that I had collected eleven hundred varieties of blank tape, you would conclude that I was out of, or off, my pram, or Brahms. (Pram, also pram, pram, prame: a flat-bottomed boat or lighter used especially in the Baltic or Netherlands for shipping cargo: 1548 "for the pram hyr havand their gudis to the ship".)

Given that the collecting urge (an urge is less biological than an instinct, but more respectable than a mania) is always based upon some false premise about the association between matter and spirit, i.e. a magical delusion, there are still categories, ranks and orders of collectors. One may collect truth, another beauty, and these are very different things. Others may collect for rarity, for importance, or for literary value; and here logical problems arise. For a book may be visibly beautiful or demonstrably rare; but a book cannot be of literary importance or merit, for the merit and value do not inhere in the single book, which is essentially a replicate.

We all adopt various stratagems to cope with this epistemological scandal at the heart of our idea. A sophisticated bibliography from a very senior bookseller reckons that one sells not a historical datum but a historical object, and therefore that a book that has been in any way sophisticated or is less than perfect (they never sell books that are less than perfect or in any way sophisticated) is not a second best but an absurdity: a book lacking a half-title is as relevant as a tripod lacking a leg. The trouble is that historical validity is a very imponderable sort of commodity to be dealing in: what you are collecting is the good faith and good sense of the bookseller and of each preceding owner and handler.

One solution is to collect only important copies: author's own copies with corrections, critics' copies, dedication copies. Adam Smith's copy of *Decline and Fall*, Leavis's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* have recently been offered for sale — so briefly, was Emerson's copy of *Walden*, or was it Thoreau's copy of *Representative Men*, but it disappeared in a flurry of recriminations and lawsuits when the real owners discovered it had gone. You can go and inspect Darwin's copy of *Das Kapital*, and observe that it is unopened and thus unread; from the near-sublime to the near-ridiculous, I drove my family mad the other night, as they watched *Riddle of the Sands*, by reminding them that my copy of the book was a presentation from Briskine Children to one E. Heaton Ellis, a yachtsman and later Assistant Director of Intelligence, Admiralty, and did they realize what that meant?

The sceptical eighties! Has there ever been since 999 AD a time of more credulous self-deception, a time when more kinds of contradictory occult rubbish have been simultaneously believed, a time when a public maddened by hard science was ready to be taken in by every spook, fakir, alchemist, mesmerizer, guru and shaman?

When there is software (save the ink!) for astrologers, when witchcraft is a sociopolitical option, when the cinema is given over to bloody fairy stories and wonder tales, when men believe that electron orbits are where you think they are, that you can fly or at least levitate by taking thought, that the Hoover Dam was built by interstellar piranha fish; that invisible lines of influence join our organs, our hilltops, our fates with distant astronomical bodies (or rather with the illusory patterns of those bodies); a carnival (mundus vult decipi) for the zombie, the Salem, golemic, anomic.

But I am being unfair. We Scorpions are you know, especially when the moon is in the fifth quarter, and a white cat walks across the country, raising the prairie-vibrations in our Aftersniff ourselves, when the Iching is on the cake, the gulf is off the gingerbread and the old Orgone shines down like on London Day.

The foregoing, would you have guessed, was attached to a nine-and-a-half-inch "collect-

ble" of Mark Twain: doll to you. Two questions arise, and each might make a Statesman-like competition: what does *Effanbee* stand for, and who's next?

★ ★ ★

"Dinosaurs or reptilis", writes Joseph C. Geraci, "lived about 300,000,000 years ago in the age of the amphibians. They were slow and squat." Mr Geraci is owner and chief brochurist of Dinosaur Land, Virginia ("Unbelievable but true!", "A prehistoric forest comes to life from the past!", "Absolutely no imagination was used in the construction of these animals, only the color and the face!"). He's a proud man, as you would be if you owned a *Triceratops*, a *Pachycephalosaurus*, and a *Procompsognathus*, not to speak of a 60' shark, a 70' octopus, a praying mantis (size not declared) and King Kong ("considered to be the eighth wonder of the world") and he's determined to set us straight: "Facts not fiction, that you should know about the early life of the dinosaurs. They were as true as you are alive. These facts are given by the Museum of Natural History. Our leading geologists say that among the ranks of the labyrinthodonts, (the name meaning labyrinthine toothed) was given the name because of the unusual structure of their teeth. These animals (labyrinthodonts) were the first to have vertebrae, or back bone which eventually led to men."

It's a good strong start, but it's about all Geraci has space for, apart from a few soul-stirring pictures of King Rex, the Tyrannosaurus and the full list of exhibits, which include Cave Women, King Cobras and something called Diatryman. He sounded like a new video arcade game about slimming until I realized it was a simple misprint for Dairyman; they come from all over Va, and even nearby parts of Md and Pa, to see UHT, the Jurassic roundsman, carrying his crates of mammoth cream and semiskimmed mastodon yoghurt from cave to cave in the crisp light of dawn.

★ ★ ★

I am not often stupefied (G.B.S.'s word: Shavians must be eagerly awaiting the next chunk of the *OED* supplement to see whether it gets the official nod) but I surely stupored during a recent television programme, a revisionist view of the Second World War, which maintained, among other daring theses, that soldiers were often frightened and occasionally ran away, that civilians grumbled, that courage, cheerfulness and resolution were not universal. A person who claimed to have grown up believing the Dunkirk Myth, which was apparently that the entire British Army was taken off the beaches by grown-up Swallows and Amazons (Cap'n Nancy and Roger commanding) with a little assistance from the SS Saucy Sally, had now discovered that it wasn't. Such manipulation might have fooled his parents, he insinuated, but wouldn't do for (quote) "the sceptical eighties!"

The sceptical eighties! Has there ever been since 999 AD a time of more credulous self-deception, a time when more kinds of contradictory occult rubbish have been simultaneously believed, a time when a public maddened by hard science was ready to be taken in by every spook, fakir, alchemist, mesmerizer, guru and shaman?

When there is software (save the ink!) for astrologers, when witchcraft is a sociopolitical option, when the cinema is given over to bloody fairy stories and wonder tales, when men believe that electron orbits are where you think they are, that you can fly or at least levitate by taking thought, that the Hoover Dam was built by interstellar piranha fish; that invisible lines of influence join our organs, our hilltops, our fates with distant astronomical bodies (or rather with the illusory patterns of those bodies); a carnival (mundus vult decipi) for the zombie, the Salem, golemic, anomic.

But I am being unfair. We Scorpions are you know, especially when the moon is in the fifth quarter, and a white cat walks across the country, raising the prairie-vibrations in our Aftersniff ourselves, when the Iching is on the cake, the gulf is off the gingerbread and the old Orgone shines down like on London Day.

My friend Ms Ge Polter, membership secretary of Succubi Against the Bomb, puts it all down to psi mesons.

★ ★ ★

One reason for going to Toronto (there are others, like travelling on a subway system where tunnels lead to bright train-bearing platforms and not to blind, uriferous culs-de-sac, the handiwork of crazed rodents. Doctor, am I becoming monomaniac on the topic of London Transport? Son, there are dark passages in the mind also) was to renew my nodding acquaintance with Crad Kilodney, the world's first street novelist. He was still in business at the same stand, on the corner of Bay Street and Bloor Street, offering to the passing stocks-and-bondmen — who continued to pass, mostly — copies of *Human Secrets* Vol III (Charnel House Press, Toronto). The price has risen since Vol II, and he was no longer exhibiting his world's-least-popular-writer badge. Was sardony out, I wondered. "I may have grown more adroit with the passage of time", he opined. The stories are adroit indeed, macabre and funny, and perhaps less outlandish than their mode of sale. Mr Kilodney is also the author of *Sex-Slaves of the Astro-Mutants*, *Gainfully Employed in Limbo* and *Lightning Struck My Dick*, doubtless the same Dick whose adventures are so affectingly recounted in *Dick, the little Pony* (1811) by the anonymous author of *The Adventures of Bob, the Dog of Knowledge*. Admiration for Mr Kilodney, and speculation about how well eminent British novelists would fare if they had to hawk their own productions, is, as always, deflected by musing on what Crad Kilodney's name is an anagram of. Conrad, Colia, Corday, Kilodine, Drake and Dinkel jostle and obstruct one another. Rancid Donkey? Cockney Doric? Kennidy Lorea, the Celtiberian Laureate?

★ ★ ★

If a book is going to turn out badly, I like it to do the upstanding, the manly thing and signal its wonkiness from the start. The British Library and other catalogues list many editions of the works of John Ashworth of Rochdale, Primitive Methodist preacher, teetotaler and rigid Sabbatarian, founder of a chapel for the destitute, prig and busybody, seller of tracts by the million in Russian, Spanish and Welsh, but they do not record one like mine.

They have his *Simple Tales* and his *Strange Tales from Humble Life*, his *Walks in Canaan* and his *Back from Canaan*, and also something called *City Missionaries and Pious Frauds*, or *John Ashworth under a cloud* by one Mr Croft;

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

John Austoker is research officer at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Oxford.

J. C. Beckett's books include *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923*, 1966.

Carol Blum is Assistant Professor of French at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

T. A. J. Burnes's catalogue of the manuscripts in Thomas James Wise's Ashley Library was published last year.

F. W. Carter is the author of *An Industrial Geography of Prague 1848-1921*, 1982.

Terence Cave's *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* was published in 1979.

Peter Clarke's *Literals and Social Democrats*, 1981, was recently reissued in paperback.

Michael Crowder is Professor of History at the University of Botswana.

Lewis Foreman's *Bax: A composer and his times* was published last year.

Robert Fothergill is the author of *Private Chronicles: A Study of English Diaries*, 1974.

Ernest Gellner is William Wyse Professor Elect of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge.

Hugh Haughton is a lecturer in English at the University of York.

Terence Hawkes is the author of *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 1977.

Reginald Hill's crime novels include *Who Guards a Prince*, 1982.

Christopher Hope's collection of stories, *Private Paris and Other Tales* was published in 1982.

R. J. Kenney's edition of *Moretum*, sometimes ascribed to Virgil, was published last year.

Patrick McCarthy is the author of *Cannus: A Critical Study of His Life and Work*, 1982.

R. J. Morris is a senior lecturer in Economic History at the University of Edinburgh.

Roy Porter's most recent book is *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1982.

Pat Rogers is the author of *Henry Fielding: A Biography*, 1979.

Victor Rothwell is a lecturer in History at the University of Edinburgh.

Julian Rushton is Professor of Music at the University of Leeds.

John Scarborough is Professor of Ancient History, and the History of Medicine and Pharmacy at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Zara Steiner is editor of *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, 1982.

Norman Stone is Professor of Modern History Elect at the University of Oxford.

Michael Sullivan is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford.

F. M. L. Thompson is Director of The Institute of Historical Research.

David Vaisey is Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library.

P. M. Wetherill is Reader in French at the University of Manchester.

Zlaty Zlaty's novel, *Russian Service*, has been recently serialized on BBC Radio 3.

likewise John Ashworth's anonymous defenders' defense exposed, by the Rochdale Secular Society. The cause of the row is obscure, but they may have been offended by the Strange Tale of John Sanderson and Little Alice. Canning John Ashworth, hero of all his own tales, wins round the dying freethinker, who had very properly threatened to take a poker to any unsolicited parson, by launching against him a hymn-singing little toady, crammed with songs about the Awful End of Freethinkers. A few nagging later it's "Oh Mr Ashworth, I am a miserable nun". Sanderson goes to psalm-singing glory but his friends in the Rochdale Sec Soc are understandably nettled. "The accuracy of one tale was challenged, but for most sufficient vouchers could be adduced" says DNB mildly. What's special about my copy? It's called, on the title page, unpromisingly, *Strange Tales from Humble Life*. And did they discard the faulty copies? No, a small box on the title-page reads "SOLDATA REDUCED PRICE IN SCOTLAND ONLY for behoof of the working classes".

★ ★ ★

I hope your appetite for transcendently bad verse is as voracious as mine, for it keeps on coming. An amiable Californian has sent me some Idella Clarence Hoobler, of Worcester, Mass, including the poem "People of Today".

Many people of today
Think they're cunning and funny
And plan to enjoy others' money
By calling them their lasses and honey,
And never appearing grumbly.

Many people of today
Are soothsayers, surveyors,
Bricklayers, welshers, players,
Adulators, complainers,
And contemptible constrainers.

Many people of today
Are conveyed o'er the world in various ways
By steam vehicle and bicycle speed.
The latter is enjoyed indeed,
And will supersede,

A remarkable and talented poetess . . .

Ms Ge Polter: Why do you choose to employ a condescending word that specifies the poet's gender when you would not dream of specifying the poet's race, haircolour or socks? Not my word, but Ms Hoobler's; listen again: "The Poetess":

A poetess I should like to be
With intellect to link as fast as think
And from it never, never shrink
And continual work complete,
And never be left in the cold and bleak.
Nor of unaccomplished work to think
And impatiently grow weak.

My sentiments exactly.

Letters

Promoting British Novelists

Sir, — May I assure Lorna Sage ("The battle of the books", March 2) that I did not ask the panel selecting The Best of British Authors to exclude Doris Lessing or Sir Angus Wilson on the grounds that they were "not promotable" or for any other reason?

Your readers may be interested to hear that the independent Euromonitor annual research study shows that there has been a significant increase in the reading of modern novels since the start of the "Best of . . ." series of promotions. That was the objective.

DESMOND CLARKE.

Faber and Faber, 3 Queen Square, London WC1.

Sidney's 'Old Arcadia'

Sir, — It would be charitable to conclude that Katherine Duncan-Jones's travesty of P. J. Croft's elegant argument in her review of *Literary Autographs* (March 2) is the result of nothing more than lack of care. Indeed, were this not the case I would have been compelled to compliment her on the skill with which she contrives to hesitate a doubt, and, with the merest suspicion of a curled lip, tries to teach the rest to sneer. I am reluctant therefore to repeat such stuff, but in the cause of truth I have to reproduce her words:

The evidence as set out requires us to believe that Harrington employed two scribes to copy out the romance, but himself penned eight lines of prose, at no very significant point, and six lines of verse (OA 66, 141-7). These short passages enable Croft to identify the MS as Harrington's.

The minor slip (there are seven lines of verse) is of no consequence except as a symptom. Vastly more important are, first, Miss Duncan-Jones's omission of the fact that Harrington's own hand wrote also the first two pages of prose (Pol 1' and Pol 1'') (Croft, p144), and, second, her complete failure to mention that Croft has conclusively demonstrated that the Philipps MS of Sidney's *Old Arcadia* belongs to a family of three manuscripts all produced in the same way by a team consisting of Harrington and other(s), sometimes changing from one scribe to another in mid-stanza or mid-line. (Miss Duncan-Jones's subtle rounding-down of two pages seven and a half lines of prose into exactly eight lines of prose is not without its own distorting weight here.) The other two manuscripts are both of Harrington's translation of *Orlando Furioso* (BL Add MS 18920 and Bodleian MS Rawl Poet 125; Croft deals in detail with the BL copy for the printer; your readers in Oxford will be able to observe for themselves from the first page of MS Rawl Poet 125 that Harrington wrote the heading, the side notes and the first stanza of text, and that the scribe who took over imitated his hand.) There is in short no doubt whatsoever that the Philipps MS of *Old Arcadia* was copied by Harrington and two scribes.

Miss Duncan-Jones is, of course, entitled to her opinion that "the unique readings are consistently Sidneian in style", contrary though this may be to the view expressed by those two great editors of Sidney, Ringer and Robertson; she is even entitled to believe that Harrington, the translator of *Orlando Furioso*, could not have written "A golden fire where sugar still distilled is" — a line nowhere mentioned by Croft; what she is not entitled to do, however, is throw in a reference to the Otley MS (which is of some poems in the *Arcadia*) as though it were somehow relevant here — it is not; and above all what she is not entitled to do is to assert that Croft has made statements which are precisely the opposite of those he does make. Miss Duncan-Jones alleges that "none of the unique readings occurs in what we are told is Harrington's hand; indeed, marginal corrections of some of them, apparently based on collation with the 1598 printed text, are said by Croft to be in his hand." On the contrary, there are unique readings on Pol 1' and Pol 1' which is in Harrington's hand (Croft, pp 67-8); the marginalia in Harrington's own hand do not correct unique readings and nowhere does Croft say that they do. They are later revisions and expansions of an unrevise'd version of OA62 and they also contain unique readings. These marginalia derive, as Croft points out (p 45 and Appendix 2) from the 1593 (not 1598)

printed text, and, as he suggests, some may well have been "improved" by Harrington; they are listed by Croft (pp 71-3).

So let there be no mistake: the Philipps MS of Sidney's *Old Arcadia* is a manuscript written by Harrington and two scribes, and, if Robertson and Ringer are right that the unique readings can be attributed to "scribal inventiveness", then the scribe who invented them is more likely to have been Harrington himself than the two less intelligent beings in both of whose hands they are also found.

R. E. ALTON,
St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

T. S. Eliot

Sir, — Michael Hastings continues to suggest that there is some sort of conspiracy of secrecy about T. S. Eliot's first marriage.

In my letter to the TLS of February 24 I asked anybody who had further questions about the Faber/Eliot archive or the Estate to write to me, rather than to Mrs Eliot. I soon had a letter from Mr Hastings (dated February 27) in which he said: "The poet Harry Fainlight wrote to me and insisted a section of a poem by Eliot referred to a period during the early years of his marriage to Vivienne." Hastings quoted ten lines from the poem. He asked me to identify it, and he sought permission to quote it in his play. His letter was marked "copy to the editor of the TLS". However, the letter you published on March 9 is quite differently worded, and ignores my reply to his request for information. In the published letter he writes, with a tinge of melodrama: "I have been sent in the post a section of a poem which is claimed to be by Eliot." My letter had already explained to him that the ten lines he quoted were indeed by Eliot, that they are accessible in the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library, and that they are from an unpublished poem of thirty-eight (not ninety lines). "The Love Song of St Sebastian". I also told him that we would not give permission for these lines to be quoted in his play, and that they are to be included in a complete edition of Eliot's poems in due course.

Although Hastings gives an acknowledgement to the Berg Collection in his printed play-text, he overlooked this manuscript. The original is in the Berg and a copy with slight variants, which was enclosed in a letter from Eliot to Conrad Aiken (now in the Huntington Library), is in the McKeldin Library in the University of Maryland. The letter to Aiken is dated July 25, 1914, but the poem had been written earlier and well before Eliot met Vivienne Haigh-Wood. The letter and the enclosure will be included in the first volume of Mrs Eliot's edition of her husband's correspondence.

Hastings concludes his letter to you: "Dare I suggest that a catalogue of secrecy appears still to cloak study of Eliot?" Dare I suggest that more diligent and efficient research would have answered this and other questions with which he is so preoccupied, almost, one might say, obsessed?

This correspondence confirms for me how correct and sensible Mrs Eliot was in deciding not to cooperate with Mr Hastings in writing his play, or to give him permission to quote from Eliot's work.

MATTHEW EVANS,
Faber and Faber, 3 Queen Square, London WC1.

Sir, — I am sorry that Valerie Eliot feels that she has been misled (Letters, February 17). The facts are that letters dated pre-1916 and in the late 1950s available for consultation at the Huntington Library contain T. S. Eliot's "King Polo" limericks. Mrs Eliot says that T. S. Eliot and Conrad Aiken "would repeat or refer to them in conversation and correspondence". Nowhere in the materials that I have seen does T. S. Eliot express disapproval of the limericks' contents. Indeed such limericks occur in letters written by him with 1950s dating. Even if the later "King Polo" occurrences are repetitions of earlier pre-1916 materials, or later copies of them, or reminders of past innuendoes between friends of long standing, their unsavoury nature remains.

WILLIAM BAKER,
10 Sirenter Court, Foir Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

Sir, — Peter Redgrove (Letters, March 9) now says that we do not "need to know the private life before we can read an author". This is an advance; the literature of the world comes back into circulation.

The references to Shakespeare and Dante are strictly beside the point, for they are based on the author's works and not — I take it! — on hitherto unpublished diaries and correspondence.

Of course we all find that "great works make us want to know more about their authors". It is perhaps a mercy that we know so little.

C. H. SISON,
Moorfield Cottage, The Hill, Langport, Somerset.

'Spreading the Word'

Sir, — I would like to correct a serious mistake in Colin McGinn's review (March 2) of my book, *Spreading the Word*. McGinn says that I recognize that we speak and think as if the position in moral philosophy called projectivism were not true. But this is not something I recognize; indeed it is something I explicitly deny. By saying the reverse, McGinn shows that he has not understood at least the second part of the book. For the upshot of my discussion is not an "attachment" to projectivism (an attachment allegedly blind to the possibility of such a theory in the philosophy of mind and of material objects: the former is discussed in chapter 3.4, in connection with Wittgenstein, and the latter in chapter 6.5, in connection with Kant). I twice stress that a full defence of the position would require investigations in moral philosophy which lie outside the scope of the philosophy of language. Projectivism, in my discussion, is used to show students how it can be debated whether an utterance has a truth-condition. It introduces the theory of truth. The true import of the discussion is that projectivism can successfully explain the features of ordinary thought which tempt people to other theories of truth and fact. It is this which is important, and it is precisely the opposite of the opinion McGinn attributes to me.

This is more than a slip. McGinn has trouble placing these issues within the philosophy of language. But the methodological issue — the theory of truth and truth-conditions — certainly falls there. McGinn may try to deny this, since although he begins by repeating my view of the place of the philosophy of language, he then equates it with "the study of language proper", by which he means the internal study of the semantics of different constructions. My book instead concentrates upon problems of reference, predication, expression, truth, verification and understanding. McGinn is at liberty to find these uninteresting, but his objection is then merely that I do not share his unusual and depressingly restrictive view of philosophy.

SIMON BLACKBURN,
Pembroke College, Oxford.

Athol Fugard

Sir, — Dennis Walder, in his review (February 10), questions the authenticity of Athol Fugard's *Notebooks 1960-1977*, which I edited, and charges Fugard with compromising himself.

Dr Walder cites extracts which Fugard had used in introductions to the published editions of his plays as differing from the passages printed in the *Notebooks*; but those extracts were based on versions which Barney Simon had freely edited for *Classic* magazine in Johannesburg some years ago. And Walder cites a discrepancy in the dates of notes relevant to *A Lesson from Aloes*. It is surprising that he did not detect that those given in the introduction to the published text of that play were patently inaccurate. Fugard tends to be vague about dates, as about the spelling of certain words. In my editing it did not occur to me to point out that I had corrected several such mistakes.

In short, the *Notebooks* are authentic. MARY DENSON,
34 Langford Court, London NW8.

An English translation of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *La Sorcière du Jassin*, reviewed in the TLS of February 24, will appear in spring 1985 from Scholar Press in the UK and Panther Books in New York.

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Clarendon Press

A bull in the stable

Peter Kemp

D. H. LAWRENCE
The Boy in the Bush
Channel 4

The Boy in the Bush is a book in which it's sometimes difficult to see the wood for the trees. Individual episodes loom with towering abruptness, obscuring wider perspectives. The narrative is tangled and, on occasions, disappears under thickets of theorizing. Partly, the novel's disorientating effect seems due to its genesis. Its original author, Mollie Skinner, sent it in manuscript to D. H. Lawrence who found it vivid but incoherent. Getting her permission to rewrite it, he promised to supply "a unity, a rhythm, and a little more psychic background".

What Lawrence most noticeably worked into the material, though, were rather diverse strands of his familiar themes: a concern with "blood" (both in the racial sense, and as opposed to "mind-consciousness"); an insistence on female submission; and a dismissal of "narcissistic one-couple-in-a-cottage domesticity" - here replaced by vehemently advocated polygamy. In order to encompass such subjects, the book shifts considerably in its final sections. Initially focusing upon a contrast between England and Australia - the hero, expelled from the Old Country, gradually assimilates himself into a new world - the novel concludes with fulminations about contrasts between men and women. These latter chapters - "a bit startling", Lawrence felt, "a rather daring development" - made Mollie Skinner weep. For, in them, her English lamb-like hero is processed by Lawrence into a swaggering chunk of bully beef, a macho myrmidon who observes of the women he's considering for his harem, "It is an honour for them to be taken by me".

As often with Lawrence, immediate personal circumstances cast light on the work. The polygamous panache seems partly a gesture of defiance at Frieda who had recently - to Lawrence's bitterness - left him for Europe and her children. It is also, of course, another way of exorcising his customary dread of female domination: by possessing several women, Jack, the hero, hopes to avoid being possessed by one. Like numerous Lawrence protagonists, he wants involvement without engulfment. The narrative shows him trying to attain

this in a variety of ways - from his semi-detached relationship with a sprawling family to husky half-intimacies with a male comrade. There's another kind of integration central to the book, as Hugh Whitmore's television adaptation rightly underlined: a reconciling of the social and animal aspects of people. A desirable balance of these two elements is repeatedly demonstrated in the work by horse-riding. Equine events - as the television version stressed by opening each instalment with film of a galloping rider - are crucial to the novel. Starting as harness-cleaner at Agricultural College, Jack progresses, after subjugating an unbroken stallion, to a state where he feels keenest happiness when mounted on his horse - together with which he resembles "a sort of centaur". True to his priorities, when trying to seduce a woman, he invites her to "Come and sleep in the stable... with me and the horses". She brides at this, though another girl agrees to go along with Jack when his stallion tempestuously mates with her mare.

While faithful to the book's horsey enthusiasms, Whitmore's adaptation failed to pick up other pervasive thematic threads, and largely confined itself to plaiting the cruder bits of story-line into a conventional yarn. To this end, characters were discarded; incidents telescoped, distorted or re-arranged. Invented episodes were inserted, with the film showing an especial fondness for concocted aquatic sequences: Jack almost drowning during a flood, or bashfully peeping at the heroine, Monica, as she lyrically showered underneath a waterfall.

Monica's personality got washed out as well. In the novel, she's a feral figure, all "she-lion peerings" and panther-like pounces. The film reduced her from big cat to sex-kitten, with a highly unLawrentian line in purring consideration: "Forgive me, I didn't mean to be cruel". "It must be awful feeling lonely - and so far from home". Similar side-stepping of Lawrence's ferocity were apparent in the presentation of Jack. Kenneth Branagh played him with hefty conviction, given the limitations of the script. But these limitations proved cramping, with his Lawrence evolution into something more primal never being effectively conveyed. Admittedly, it's a tall order for a dramatization to find ways of indicating that "a queer sullen snake reared its head haughtily in Jack's soul", and the like. But even his physical metamorphosis was pallidly presented. Supposedly ending as weather-beaten as he's psychically flayed, Jack here hadn't even acquired a tan.

A neo-classical dream

Julian Rushton

C. W. VON GLUCK
Orpheus and Eurydice
Grand Theatre, Leeds

A narrow portico, tumbled slabs of inscribed marble, sand: these form Opera North's setting for Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, an opera conceived as a uniquely intense blend of scenery, dancing, mime, poetry and music. On this relic of antiquity the chorus appear in ageless peasant garb; and a young man, bewigged and powdered in eighteenth-century fashion - Winckelmann? Goethe? - probes the ruins. He draws out a lyre; and the scene becomes Eurydice's funeral. The young man watches, then is moved to intervene, taking the role of Amor, and he remains, willing Orpheus to succeed, throughout the action. This rids us of a winged Cupid, and is acceptable once we understand the whole opera as a neo-classical dream; this, fortunately, is not too great an imaginative leap. It differs from the almost contemptuous distancing effects occasionally imposed on, for instance, Handel, in the belief that operatic antiquities are only tolerable if made quaint.

This *Orpheus*, produced and designed by Philip Prowse, is deeply serious, even unrelenting. It plays without an interval. There is virtually no dancing, those *balli*, which seem integral to Gluck's musical design, being filled with rather minimal ritual actions - decidedly preferable, however, to dancers uncertain of their function. The chorus is deployed as mourners, demons, blessed spirits and celebrants at a peasant wedding, without changing costume. The lighting, after a promising touch of blue, is perhaps too much like broad daylight in Elysium, but the absence of scene-change, including chorus, is acceptable not merely as an economy when it focuses attention on the human heart of the work: Orpheus himself, virtually fixed to the slab on which Eurydice's body lies loosely shrouded.

The opera is sung in a new English translation by Andrew Porter which scarcely puts a foot wrong. Even he, however, has not eliminated the clanging participle ("She's not replying") and although literal, could not "barbarous pain and grief" be improved? Generally the diction of the principals - the choral words are often less clear - exemplifies the commitment of the company to this opera as a dramatic experience: the touchstone of Gluck performance.

The version used, like the staging, makes no pretensions to authenticity. A repertory company cannot engage in theatrical archaeology and Gluck, a practical man, might have agreed that a concern for the letter of the score is justifiable in recording and concert performance, but is likely to endanger theatricality. Where the composer has left two quite incompatible versions in print, and is known to have sanctioned other variants, every production must find its own compromise. There are no regrettable omissions (least of all the huge Furies' dance, borrowed by Gluck from *Don Juan*), and only one regrettable inclusion. The optimistic final aria to Act I is nowadays attributed to Gluck, but he wrote it for a tenor; and, which is more important, it strikes a false note after the intensely realistic apprehensions of the preceding recitative: this Orpheus is doomed, and *knows* he cannot pass the test.

Opera North uses a woman in the name-part, ostensibly a bad nineteenth-century tradition which is almost invariably justified in practice. We cannot have an authentic voice unless we use the tenor of Gluck's 1774 Paris version; even then the role presents appalling problems not in the original, and the Paris version involves Gluck's own ruin of the carefully planned key scheme of the 1762 Vienna form. Equally, however, Paris includes genuine improvements and additions which there is no good reason to sacrifice. A woman's voice is probably no further removed in timbre from the castrato than is the fashionable alternative, a male alto; and a woman is far more likely to possess sufficient vocal strength and flexibility to offer a mature and affecting interpretation.

Felicity Palmer moves well and, despite slight vocal breaks and weak low notes, sings affectingly throughout. "Che farò" ("I have lost my Eurydice") is particularly moving. The vocal contrast with Cathryn Pope's adroitly acted Amor and the touchingly naive Eurydice of Patricia Rozario (surely the right interpretation, despite some commentators who find her unworthy of her husband) is more than sufficient for Gluck's purpose. The best tribute I can pay to the conductor, David Lloyd Jones, is that I was unaware of him, so just were his tempi and timing. This *Orpheus* will not please everyone, because it takes risks with the text and with our expectations about performance style; but its sober and unified vision of the work deserves to be experienced and remembered.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 165
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than April 6. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or falling that the most nearly correct.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 165" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX.

1 A fox of this gait, or a gait of this fox, for the one or the other plays the rogue with my great toe.
2 One's patience gets exhausted by staying a prisoner. In bed all day through a sudden freak of one's enemy - new to me, though - for I have known very little of gait as yet. However, he's gone to my other toe in a very mild manner, and I expect he'll stick off altogether by the morning.
3 You must know, sir, that to the unhappiness of us all, his lordship has found himself temporarily vexed by gout. It is my hope that in such a disagreeable situation, a frank, though private account of my travels and of the society in which I find myself may afford him some diversion.

Competition No 161
Winner: Jonathan Shaw
Answers:
1 Not only do not degrade them, or remit.
2 To life obscure, which were a fair dismission. But throw them lower than thou didst exalt them high.
3 Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, lines 687-9.
2 As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low.
Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence".
3 If a man will comprehend the richness and variety of the universe, and inspire his mind with a due measure of wonder and awe, he must contemplate the human intellect not only on its heights of genius but in its abysses of ineptitude.
A. E. Housman, *Preface to Maritius*. (O)

Anarchy and aspiration

Norman Stone

BARBARA JELAVICH
History of the Balkans:
Volume 1, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.
407pp. 0 521 252490
Volume 2, Twentieth Century. 476pp.
0 521 25448 5
Cambridge University Press.
£25 (paperback, £9.95) each.

"Where in England you write a letter to *The Times*, in the Balkans you throw a bomb." Barbara Jelavich's book shows why, for it is a record of poverty, disease, oppression, torture, rape and murder: a characteristic passage, describing events in the early nineteenth century, states that

the break-down of central authority resulted... in the prevalence in many regions of armed bands, legal and illegal, with often competing jurisdictions. The activities of gypsies, kirdzhalis, illegal janissaries, bandits and Bosnian captains... the legal or quasi-legal formations of the armatoles, the police forces of the municipal authorities or the notables, the legal janissary units, the Serbs of the Military Frontier, and a Wallachian militia known as the *pandours*.

Heroism of aspiration, fortunately, cuts across an otherwise squalid picture.

In many respects Albania exemplifies the difficulty of writing Balkan history. The language has no known affinities or origins (nowadays the only unfettered branch of scholarship in Albania is archaeology, which may lead to a discovery of roots) and the place was endlessly divided: Catholic Ghegs in the north, Moslem Tosks in the centre and south, with an Orthodox group and a Greek minority to complicate matters. Though the borders had some definition because of Albania's ring of mountains, there were invasions from all sides, which meant that, periodically, there would be an Albanian emigration - in the fifteenth century, to southern Italy (where you can still find Albanian villages), and later on to Serbia, which nowadays contains more Albanians than there are at home. Blood-feuds, going on for generations, distinguished the place; for many cen-

turies, the Albanians counted as the Turks' most feared collaborators.

By 1900, Ottoman rule was clearly on its last legs, and thoughts of an independent Albania arose (although Serbs and Montenegrins had other ideas). The Powers established a Prinz Wilhelm zu Wied on the throne for a few weeks before the First World War: his reign came to an end after he made an effort to levy taxes. During the war, the country was overwhelmed by various armies, and the Bulgarians had an unseemly ambition to take over. Once the war was over, Albania once more appeared on the map, and sent delegates to Versailles (the chief one was assassinated while there). Eventually, there was a wrangle between the "People's Party", led by an American-trained bishop, Fan S. Noli, and the "Progressive Party" of clans and begs, led by Ahmed Bey Zogu, soon to become King Zog: he played off Yugoslavs against Italians, converted to Catholicism and married a Hungarian countess. In 1939 he lost his throne to Mussolini, who turned the place into a formal, as distinct from informal, Italian colony (if ever countries are to be known by their colonies then Italy, with Libya, Ethiopia and Albania, has much to answer for).

To write the history of all of this is not easy: five main countries, several minorities, and four disparate, linguistic groups, have to be understood, and even then there is the difficulty that much of Balkan history was determined by events elsewhere. Jelavich's first volume (on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) has to cover a great deal of territory, beginning with a (very effective) description of Ottoman rule, and proceeding through complicated Eastern-Question negotiations, the beginnings of nationalism, and the establishment of the quarrelling nation-states: inevitably, there are digressions on 1848 in the Habsburg Monarchy, the relationship of Croatia to Hungary, and other issues in Austrian history. The second volume concerns events in this century, and it ends with a good essay on how "bourgeois-democratic" Greece has developed, in unspoken comparison with the People's Democracies to the north.

The book is clearly written, and its standard of impartiality is so high that you cannot easily

tell from which perspective its author is writing (I guessed liberal Croat, but was not sure): she even contrives to be nice about Romania. The standard of accuracy, too, is high, so far as I can judge (although Austria did not lose all of Galicia in 1809, just the eastern part, around Tarnopol; and D'Annunzio's coup in Fiume did not take place in 1922). The book is more informative than, say, L. S. Stavrianos's earlier essay. On the other hand, a chronological-political method, stretched over two centuries and five countries, almost inevitably leads to problems of superficiality: 450 pages for the twentieth century mean almost inescapably that the reader fresh to the subject becomes bogged down in a narrative of Brattianus, Radices, Venizelos, Madame Lupescu, Boris, etc. On an academic level, the book is weakened by its reference only to English-language sources.

This is a misfortune, because the modern history of the Balkans poses some important and interesting questions as to political emancipation, national consciousness and "modernization", whether liberal or Communist. The influence of ideas, though very difficult to describe, is inescapable: much of Balkan history was made by small groups of intellectuals, whose ideas were powerful, though sometimes ludicrously inappropriate to circumstances (what could have been more out of place than the early Greek nationalist's dream of a "Megali Idea" to re-create the Byzantine empire?). Probably, more people of Balkan origin died in defence of the Turks than in overcoming them: at Navarino, the Ottoman fleet was mainly crewed by Greeks, just as in 1683 at the siege of Vienna the Ottoman army was largely Balkan. In the nineteenth century, Balkan intellectuals could have a wonderful time more or less inventing languages: Romanian, for instance, could be artificially extrapolated from old Latin text-books by a few dozen people (in 1838 the *Gazeta de Transilvania* had 500 subscribers only); Jelavich has a good description of the wrangles, in Serbo-

Croat circles, between the exponents of "chloakavian", "kujkavian" and "chakavian"; and the Greeks' extreme desire to use classical models even for modern inventions has resulted in *katharsis* meaning "laundromat" and *meisfora esoterica* "foreign bus travel". These intellectuals and their upper-class protectors were well aware of their isolation among a vastly indifferent peasantry, and, like their counterparts in the Risorgimento, they used force and fraud when it came to elections. In 1864, Alexander Cuza's rule in Romania was ratified in a plebiscite by "682,621" votes to "1,307"; in 1866, the new Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen rule was similarly ratified, by "685,969" votes to "224".

The process by which these relatively small élites changed their allegiance from Turks to nationalism is difficult and unclear. The problem is all the greater since the Ottoman empire was, to a large extent, run by Greeks anyway: the Grand Dragoman, who ran foreign policy, was usually a Greek, and so were the men who administered the navy. In Moldavia and Wallachia, during the eighteenth century, the hospodars, or governors, appointed by the Turks were usually Greeks (Phanariots, so-called from the *phenar* or lighthouse district of Constantinople where they lived): eleven families of Ghegics, Mavrocordatos etc, supplied seventy-four occupants of the Romanian thrones, the average length of occupancy being two-and-a-half years. It was apparently their custom, understandably enough, to rip off the country, to effect the contempt and indifference of Byzantine styles of ruling, to keep their treasures in suitcases and bags, and to make sure that they had a hedge of relatives and thugs to protect them. Prince Alexander Sutu, for instance, "arrived with eighty relatives and a suite of 800, including an Albanian Jew". It is not the smallest irony of Barbara Jelavich's pages that the most consciously modernizing movement of all, Communism, has sometimes produced chapters of history that recall old Phanariot friends.

The periodicals, 12: La Nouvelle Revue Française

Peter Fawcett

GEORGES LAMBRICHS (Editor)
La Nouvelle Revue Française
March 1984, No 374.
160pp. Subscriptions 370 fr, from 49 rue de la Varne, 92120 Montrouge, France.

Seventy-five years old in February, *La Nouvelle Revue Française* is still the most prestigious of French literary magazines. Founded by Gide and a group of friends in 1909, it grew between the wars to become the "rose des vents" or compass-card of contemporary literature, in Mauriac's splendid image. A victim of the ban affecting all publications which had continued to appear during the Occupation, it was revived in 1953 by Jean Paulhan and Marcel Arland with an extra "Nouvelle" to its name, later discreetly dropped. It continues today under the editorship of Georges Lambrichs, the first occupant of his chair not to have been formed directly by the founding fathers.

The pro-war NRF had the reputation of being at the centre of French cultural life. After the War, Paulhan's interest in the function of language took it in the direction of a more hermetic form of literature which meant that it never regained the popularity it had once held, and lost much of its eclectic flavour. Lambrichs has followed Paulhan in favouring works in which "la méditation et l'imagination" take precedence over "le témoignage et les effets", while retaining the review's traditional balance

between the creative and the critical.

The current issue reveals both the strengths and the weaknesses of existing practice. In *André Gide et le premier groupe de La Nouvelle Revue Française* (reviewed in the TLS of June 16, 1978) the late Auguste Angles showed how Gide and his colleagues took immense care to achieve a suitable variety in the contents of the magazine. This continues to be superficially so, with a sizeable chunk of intertwined verse and prose by Jacques Réda being followed by a short story by Jean-François Sené, a characteristically lapidary poem by Guillevic, and the translation of a substantial essay on the temples of Japan by the German writer Ernst Jünger, who has become something of a cult figure in France in recent years. However, there is a homogeneity in tone and subject-matter about these four pieces which the original editors would have been at pains to avoid. The first three each revolve around the subject of childhood and even Jünger shares with them a nostalgia for the inexpressible which he sees represented in the tranquil beauty of the old Japan.

That having been said, there is much to enjoy in Réda's gentle evocation of his 1930s childhood; complete with Mickey Mouse, toy soldiers and Catholic boarding-school, and Guillevic's sharply-honed stanzas are impressive for a man approaching eighty. Only Sené's story, lacking any mark of individuality, seems unworthy of the company in which it finds itself; Jünger, of course, is even older, nearer ninety, but his Malraux-like reflections demonstrate a lively curiosity and an awareness of history which goes back to his experiences as

a storm-trooper on the Somme in the First World War.

Under the heading "Chroniques", as well as regular contributions in the form of undated jottings from Henri Thomas and Jean Clair, there is an interesting study by Paul Veyne of De Sade's influence on René Char, including a recent anecdote about a visitor to Les Busclats who, on enquiring "il est pas juif, Untel?" received the response of the indignant poet: "J'ai ici mes gourdis [rude] je suis vieux mais j'ai encore la force de vous en casser un sur le dos si vous remettez les pieds chez moi". If the NRF sometimes gives the impression of having become a review of old men, there is no need to worry as long as they all display such exemplary vigour.

The critical section proper, the famous "Notes" on which the founders lavished so much pride and attention, is a disappointment. The selection of works appears limited, and most of the reviewers are more intent on showing off their own cleverness than saying anything intelligible about the items they are discussing. Only one French novel is included: that is a reprint from the 1950s. It is left to a newcomer, Jean Serradell, to show what good reviewing should be in an excellent piece on a translation from Sciaccia, *La Mer couleur de vin*. Arley highlighting the inadequacies of an earlier French version of a different work, he tells us that the great Sciaccia "écrit clairement; pour être lu par le plus grand nombre de lecteurs... et non pour rester dans les brumes fantasmagoriques d'un pré-*NRF* contributeur et éditorial-board, please take note.

Growth under the Ottoman

F. W. Carter

NIKOLAI TODOROV
The Balkan City 1400-1900
641pp. University of Washington Press.
£22.50.
0 295 95879 9

Essentially, Nikolai Todorov's monograph (first published in Bulgaria in 1972) studies city development in the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire in south-east Europe, though excluding Wallachia, Moldavia and the western part of the peninsula, which were under a different form of administration. Given the richness of his data, one might have expected greater use of statistical analysis, but by the author's own admission certain weaknesses in the material prevented him from attempting it. For example, the complete absence of birth and death rates made it impossible to calculate certain aspects of the Balkan demographic pattern under the Ottomans. Nevertheless, Todorov does more than merely describe and his primary sources allow him to analyse urban growth and its socio-economic structure in detail.

A Marxist approach to problems of socio-economic structure is to be expected from a contemporary Bulgarian historian. And as the dust-jacket puts it, "The analysis centres around the emergence of class differentiation between merchants and artisans in Balkan towns during the centuries under discussion." Todorov examines the urban development in close "connection with the social division of labour" for "Marxist historical science does not take a static view of the city". He also discusses extensively the Soviet and East European literature on the subject.

Within this framework Todorov deals with the Ottoman town in both the feudal and transitional periods, its varied types and sizes, aspects of the urban economy, Balkan Turkish

settlement, and Islamization of the indigenous population, and analyses both the Muslim and non-Muslim population structure in urban centres. He is able to conclude that in the sixteenth century the number of inhabitants of larger Balkan cities did not differ greatly from their West European counterparts; in contrast, however, smaller cities were less numerous than in other European states. More specifically, the major conclusion Todorov suggests for the earlier period is that the collapse of feudal production methods did not synchronize with the decline of the *timar-sipahi*, or Ottoman military garrison system, which began around 1600. The primary interest of Ottoman feudal vassals, he believes, was to accrue wealth with the least effort and greatest certainty. They did this through holding important military and/or administrative positions, which gave them close ties with the ruling class via the bureaucratic state machinery.

Lack of Ottoman interest in capitalism and the involvement of Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian and Jewish inhabitants in commerce and industry, in the eighteenth century, to the growth of a middle class. Larger capitalist ventures, especially in the textile industry, appeared during the nineteenth century and Todorov makes a special case study, based on family archives, of a Plovdiv firm which had the biggest "putting-out" system in the Balkan peninsula. He also examines urban taxes, and craft guilds, which have shed new light on social differences in the Ottoman Balkan city.

The work is not without blemishes. The title is rather misleading, the book concentrating as it does mainly on Bulgarian urban centres, with other parts of the Balkans either left out or treated peripherally. Although it is well equipped with appendices, notes and a helpful glossary, there appears to have been no attempt to update the 1972 bibliography, and considering the large number of cities, towns and villages mentioned in the text, the total absence of maps may leave some readers a little lost.

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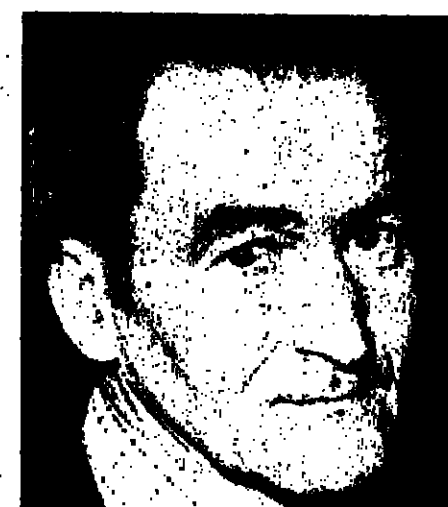
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Distinctively ungrammatical

Terence Cave

MICHAEL RIFFATERRE
Text Production
Translated by Terese Lyons
341pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press.
\$32.50.
0231 05337

"The essential problem confronting linguists in a verbal work of art is its literariness." Michael Riffaterre's opening move places him squarely in a tradition stemming from the Russian formalists via Roman Jakobson: it is no surprise to find him, on the next page, defining literariness as an exercise in "alienation" (the disruption of the reader's normal linguistic habits). Likewise, he insists that the object of analysis must always be effects of language, not the relation between literature and non-verbal reality, and sets out to uncover the rules that govern the distinctive way in which literary texts produce meaning.

What distinguishes Riffaterre from most other formalists and semiologists is, first, that he makes the individual text the focus of his analysis. Although he proposes a general set of principles and rules for "text production", the test of their efficacy is always the particular case. Thus nine of his fifteen chapters are devoted to detailed analysis of texts, and even in the other more theoretical chapters a good deal of space is given to example. If Riffaterre frequently speaks of thematic or stylistic features characteristic of a given writer ("Hugolian") or even of a literary period ("Romantic"), it is

because he concedes that the functioning of a poem or narrative must depend on its re-orientation of the literary and linguistic codes available to it. The poem is a singularity in a network of intertextual relations.

Still more central to Riffaterre's style of semiotics is his assertion that literary works rigorously control our reading: they programme it like a computer. We first try to read according to the syntactic and semantic rules of non-literary language, as if the text were mimetic (a representation), but invariably encounter obstacles, improprieties, "ungrammaticalities" that make the mimetic reading untenable. These are the distinctive features of literary discourse: they are distinctive because they force themselves on our attention, oblige us to reread according to a different frame of reference.

Hence Riffaterre's law of "perceptibility", which finds his notion of a correct reading. A feature or cluster of features which the text renders perceptible as the transgression of a norm becomes the key to a properly literary reading in which the transgression is erased and coherence recovered. Reading is like the solving of a riddle or puzzle; as in anamorphosis, there is always one – and only one – point of view from which all the relations fall into place. The moment that point is found, the significance of the text is constituted.

Riffaterre gives considerable prominence to the reader and his interaction with the text, in order both to exclude the author as anything other than a verbal phenomenon and to emphasize that signification in literature has to be produced; it is a process, not a set of inert

structures or a lump of meaning hidden "inside" the text. But it will be obvious by now that the text has the upper hand. The reader has to perform the callisthenics it dictates, or quit. Lacunae in the reader's competence, caused by cultural or historical distance, will be compensated for by the over-determination which is characteristic of literary structures. If a switch fails to operate, another circuit will be brought into play; the programme remains the same.

Those who admired Riffaterre's *Semiotics of Poetry* (1978) will be pleased to have *La Production du texte* in a fluent English translation which succeeds in avoiding the "Gallic" effect so common in translation of modern literary theory. Riffaterre's principles have not changed much since the earlier book. The term "interpretant" (a semantic feature that triggers a correct reading) is now less prominent, but the operation it designates is still central; a chapter is devoted to the value of formal analysis for literary history, another very perceptive one to neologism. Above all, a new and much wider set of examples is provided: Riffaterre has extended his range, and includes chapters on narrative prose by Chateaubriand, Balzac and Hugo as well as on poems from the sixteenth to the twentieth century.

The analysis of a sonnet from Du Bellay's *Songe* is a virtuoso performance, as is the account of Balzac's *La Paix du ménage* and Hugo's "Écrit sur la vitre d'une fenêtre flamande": all three works are compact and intricately organized, lending themselves perfectly to Riffaterre's decoding. The Chateaubriand chapter is slacker and seems at times to revert to something like a thematic study. But in the five essays on Surrealist poems Riffaterre is back on home ground: this is *par excellence* literature that blocks mimetic reading. One might have thought that the notion of a "programmed" interpretation was out of place with poets like Breton, but it turns out that automatic writing is nearer to the automatism of computers than of the psyche: it doesn't need, in this account, to be automatic in the accepted sense, only to comply with the rules by which automatic writing is constituted. The arbitrary has its codes, and is only a *cas-limite* of what goes on in all literature.

When one says that certain examples "lend themselves to Riffaterre's decoding", one is of course questioning his method. The pro-

gramme or code was supposed to be intrinsic to the text, not an excuse to display a particular reader's virtuosity. Riffaterre is undoubtedly a particular reader, capable for example of recognizing in a prose poem by Breton a sequence of details derived from an episode of *Les Misérables*, or of seeing that Rimbaud's "Vernis Anadyomène" is an exercise in the rhetoric of *vituperatio* rather than in an *outré* naturalism. What happens when a less competent reader fails to perceive the key feature that permits integration of all the others? There seems to be no fail-safe mechanism in such instances.

One might argue that Riffaterre's theory is in some sense a systematization and a defence of his own critical assurance: he is a master of programme design rather than a mere technician. The defence includes skirmishes with some familiar men of straw – crudely biographical or referential readings for example. And beneath the novel armature one can sometimes detect standard techniques of literary interpretation: the notion of an ungrammaticality that forces a shift from the mimetic to the semiotic level is not unlike an ancient principle of biblical exegesis – if you encounter an absurdity in the literal sense, read allegorically.

But the clearest indication of a repressed problem is prompted by a glance back at the conclusion of *Semiotics of Poetry*, where one finds the concession that the very process by which the literary text works towards saturation of meaning, stability and coherence is also a source of instability, since the reader will always be drawn to double back over the tricky circuit that has led him to his terminal point. "Signification" is here very clearly not a property of the text so much as an event in reading, a perhaps fleeting moment when everything seems to fit. *Text Production* has apparently erased that concession, no doubt because it undermines the controlling authority of the text and makes the print-out evanescent.

One could legitimately regret the erasure, since few readers will agree that literary works function exactly like codes or computer programs; the aleatory quality of the game is part of the fun. Yet it is no bad thing, in an era of undecidables, slippage, plurality, *l'illisible* and disappearing acts à la Stanley Fish, to find an intelligent critic defending a positive model of interpretation based on the assumption that literary works can and do signify in quite precise ways.

Delicately realized

Imre Salusinszky

JAMES GRIBBLE
Literary Education: A revaluation
182pp. Cambridge University Press. £16.50
(paperback, £4.95).
0521 253152

The question of what constitutes a literary education can hardly ever have been more controversial, or more urgent, than it is now. This makes one particularly grateful for a work which sets out the central issues as clearly as *Literary Education: A revaluation*. James Gribble's project is to locate and resolve within educational practice those issues which are central to literary discussion in the universities: the relation of form to content, of art to life, of response to analysis, of thought to technique, of authorial intention to readerly interpretation.

The critical centre of the book are in Henry James, Matthew Arnold, the New Criticism and, above all, P. R. Leavis. Gribble wants the student to learn to see the literary object in itself, and to see it whole. The teacher's task is to develop in the student an ability to perceive what is "realized": in the individual work of literature, in all its complexity and in virtual isolation from whatever the author may have intended. From this will follow the ability to respond intelligently to the work, to justify one's response to it and to make and justify a judgment of its literary value. Gribble mounts a vigorous and lengthy defence of the objectivity of value-judgment in the arts. Preferring a delicate to a rigorous criticism, and the flexible to the more rigid tools of some

contemporary practitioners, Gribble insists on the "interaction and inseparability" of elements like form and content, or thought and image, in the most highly "realized" poetry.

A problem with delicate criticism is that, by collapsing all categories in an attempt to see the object whole, it has finally to come to rest on some such notion as "taste", for which there is no accounting. Categories like "form" and "content" are of no use if in the greatest poetry they become inseparable, invisible in the very moment of being realized. Gribble's approach stands in contrast to the kind of literary schooling suggested in a series of textbooks called *Uses of the Imagination* inspired by the work of Northrop Frye. In these, the student is encouraged to classify and to categorize, and to recognize, not the uniqueness of each individual work, but the structural skeleton that places it with other literary objects of its kind. The two approaches stand as useful correctives to each other.

Gribble does not discuss material questions, and the way in which literary education is becoming steadily less available to the majority of students. With the apparently unstoppable spread of the non-principle of "relevance" in schools, most students are effectively being denied such vital backgrounds to a literary education as a training in one of the classical languages. My fear about Gribble's approach is that it unconsciously caters to this trend, placing the teacher rather than the wrong side of the student, making him an arbiter rather than an instigator. If the student has only to develop the desired response, the classroom starts to look too much like an expanded confessional, merely another of the socializing instruments of which Michel Foucault has warned.

Along the historical highway

Ernest Gellner

EERO LOONE
Sovremennaya Filosofiya Istori
293pp. Tallin: Izdatel'stvo 'Eesti Raamat'.
1 rouble.

Estonia is one of the smallest, but also one of the intellectually most active and most prosperous, republics of the Soviet Union. The contribution of its ancient university of Tartu (founded by Gustavus Adolphus shortly before he fell on the field of Lützen) to the development of Russian literary structuralism is fairly well known. Less well known is an active group of philosophers, who apparently play a major part in the cultural life of their country, and receive regular allocations of time in the mass media. One can only speculate about the contribution made to this situation by the proximity, a few hours' sail across the water and within range of television broadcasting, of the sister nation of Finland, with a mutually comprehensible language, and with its world-class philosophers such as G. H. von Wright and Jaako Hintikka.

Eero Loone is one of these Estonian philosophers. A historian by training (and ancestry), he has turned to the philosophy of history, which he practises in what can only be described as an impeccably analytic style. His sense of the distinction between conceptual and factual issues, between descriptive and evaluative ones, between substantive, theoretical and meta-theoretical ones, certainly could not be improved or sharpened, were he a product of one of those anglophone institutions, either side of the Atlantic, which pride themselves on their fastidiousness in these matters. His talk of clarifying "families of concepts" sounds as if he were a habitué of the Aristotelian Society. In fact, were he a product of one of those establishments, one might approach his book with a touch of apprehension: will this sharp machine be fed with any interesting substance? But Loone is not a product of one of those establishments, and his deployment of razor-sharp analysis is not simply the display of a locally routinized skill. On the contrary, it constitutes evidence of great intellectual independence, and of the capacity to master a style of thought not endowed with immediately obvious local bases. I am not saying that this book should be judged by relaxed standards because of its provenance: it would be an outstanding book by any standards. I am saying that the formal skills it displays deserve special note. The substance on which they are deployed is the Marxist theory of history.

The book consists of four parts. The first three in effect introduce the Russian reader to philosophy of history in its Western modal sense, and he can learn from them about the ideas of Collingwood (soon to be available in Russian), Walsh, Popper, Danto, Mandelbaum, Nadel, Hempel, Gardiner, Dray, Frankel, Passmore, M. White, W. B. Gallie, A. Naess, M. Bunge, M. Hollis, Kuhn, Morigliano, Plumb and others. A lucid introduction to this tradition or traditions must obviously be of great interest to the Soviet reader, whereas the part which would really teach something new to the Western reader is the fourth one, in which Loone turns his analytical powers on to Marxism itself.

One occasionally hears a debate in the West, as to whether there is anyone left in Eastern Europe and the USSR who still believes in Marxism. I am inclined to consider the reports of the death of Marxist faith to be somewhat exaggerated, at least as far as the Soviet Union is concerned; but the interest of Loone's work is really quite independent of the truth of the matter. Whether or not people positively believe in the Marxist scheme, no coherent, well-articulated rival pattern has emerged, West or East; and as people must needs think against some kind of grid, even (or perhaps especially) those who do not accept the Marxist theory of history tend to lean upon its ideas when they wish to say what they do positively believe.

Loone rightly singles out the theory of socio-economic formations as central to Marxism. As he puts it, it is its paradigmatic precondition. What is at issue here is a typology of societies; and, one which contains, or helps articulate, the Marxist theory of history. Soviet Marxism, as it crystallized during the

Stalin period, had a clear and sharp outline, with its theory of a single dominant historical highway, leading from Primitive Communism via Slave Society, Feudalism, and Capitalism, to the final terminus of Communism. This celebrated unilinealism is easy to attack (as a Soviet critic pointed out in a book published in 1968, the exceptions to the theory would seem to be more numerous than its positive exemplifications), and it has been widely though not universally disavowed.

The abandonment of unilinealism raises problems which are very deep. If it is disavowed and not replaced by anything, one may well ask whether one is left with any theory at all, or merely with the debris of a theory. Marxism is supposed to be a theory of historical change, providing a key to its motive force and, presumably, its overall pattern. If any kind of society can follow any other kind, without any constraints, if societies may stagnate for ever, what kind of meaning can be attached to the attribution of primacy to the forces of production, or indeed to anything else? If there are no constraints on the possible patterns of change, what point is there in seeking the underlying mechanism or the secret of constraint, when no constraint exists to be explained? If anything is possible, what could a theory explain, and what theory could be true? Those Western Marxists who blithely disavow unilinealism, as a kind of irritating and unnecessary encumbrance, without even trying to replace it with something else, do not seem to realize that all they are left with is a label, but no theory. Though unilinealism is indeed false, its unqualified abandonment leaves Marxism vacuous.

It is this situation which in effect provides Loone with his problem, and with his implicit (and to a large extent explicit) terms of reference. He is eager to reformulate a Marxism which is not merely free from the shackles of Stalinism (that goes without saying, or with a quiet reference to the unfortunate intrusion of extra-scientific considerations into scholarship in that period); but a Marxism which also incorporates the historiographical and social science advances of our time, including quantitative and logical techniques, but which above all is formulated in a way which satisfies modern, analytic criteria of theory-formation and of explanation. It is this last aspiration which is perhaps strongest in him. In some ways, his work is comparable to that of Gerry Cohen of University College London, or Jon Elster of Oslo. The last part of the book might as well have been called "Der logische Aufbau des Marxismus". It owes as much to Hempel as it does to the founding fathers of Marxism.

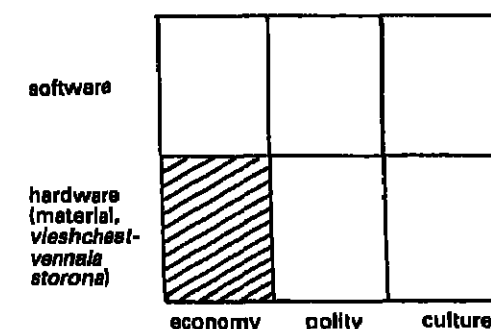
Yet Loone is in no way a scholastic. His eagerness to formalize the conceptual structure of Marxism is conspicuously and pervasively inspired by a most praiseworthy aim: to make clear what the theory does and does not explain, what historical facts it can and cannot accommodate – in brief, to avoid that vacuity and untestability which accompany sloppy formulation. Loone has a virtually Oxbridge sense of logical propriety, of the distinction between factual and conceptual issues. He deals with the latter, and goes out of his way to make clear that he is not prejudging any of the facts – please historians, do come in and settle this, once I've explained to you what the issue is, and what you are to settle. He really has the manners of an impassive civil servant, explaining technical alternatives, without allowing himself any overt opinion on matters of substantive decision.

In his endeavour (NB, without prejudice to any facts) to endow Marxism with a clear logical structure and to save it from the vacuity which threatens its over-liberal versions, one of the first issues he turns to is the stratified or layered conception of social structure, which is inherent in Marxism: the breaking up of social life into productive, administrative and cultural activity. (I translate *dukhovnaya* as "cultural" rather than the more literal "spiritual", which has too many misleading associations.)

Loone notes appositely that there exists no terminology for classifying administrative and cultural forms, corresponding to the classification of "modes of production". This is highly significant: the failure to possess such a terminology is a sign of the absence of attempts to define species of polity and culture independently of the economic base which

they serve. Unless they are so defined, he notes, what content can be given to the thesis that the economic or productive base determines the super-structural layers of social life? If it were the case that any old administrative and religious/cultural system could serve, say, the feudal mode of production, the whole contention to the effect that the base determines the other layers would become uninformative and empty. The correlation of elements from two domains (productive and super-structural), which is an essential element in "historical materialism", only has a determinate meaning if the elements in the two domains are independently defined. If one set of elements is not defined at all (let alone defined in a way that ensures independence), something has gone seriously wrong with the formulation of the theory. Fashionable Western forms of Marxism do exist, and are common in France, as Loone notes, which actually incorporate super-structural elements such as politics or religion in the economic base. That would certainly seem to ensure that the thesis of the primacy of the base will not be challenged by any facts.

Thus, as we shall see, though Loone's Marxism is pliable at some interesting points, it makes no concessions to vacuity here and it does not approach tautology. On the contrary, at its core there is a strong, testable thesis. It can perhaps best be conveyed by the following diagram (which he himself does not use):



I am not absolutely sure whether the modern notion of "hardware", material equipment, and "software", its specific deployment, corresponds fully to the distinction between material activity and productive relations: it may be that the "material side" includes equipment and its use, but just how much, is not clear to me. Note that the word Loone uses, *veshchestvennaya*, could be rendered in English as *thing-y*. What the worker does with the tool is perhaps material activity, but the fact that he does so under a foreman, is part of the "relations". Can the two be separated?

The thesis of historical materialism can be interpreted as saying either that the hardware, of all the columns jointly, determines the higher level of software as a whole; or, that the economic column, hardware and software together, determines the other two columns. Loone, if I understand him correctly, espouses the strongest possible version of Marxism, the logical product of the two positions – in other words, the claim that the material, technical part of the economic column (shaded in my diagram) determines both the upper part of its own column and the totality of the other two columns. (Western tautological Marxism, on the other hand, consists of the logical sum of the two doctrines, in other words the claim that all aspects of all activities, taken jointly, determine the condition of a society. No doubt.)

That is Loone's strong, uncompromising side. But he insists on pliable, flexible interpretation, when it comes to the demands of synchronization between conditions and changes at the various distinct levels of social life. Here he offers an interestingly and refreshingly precise account of how two not immediately compatible elements in Marxism can after all be harmonized. Marxism is markedly "functionalist" in that it refuses to see society as a mass of shreds and patches: political and cultural institutions are there to serve the system. But it also insists on conflict and disharmony (above all between the forces and the relations of production, the hardware and the software) as the prime agent of inevitable change. Just how do these two doctrines dovetail?

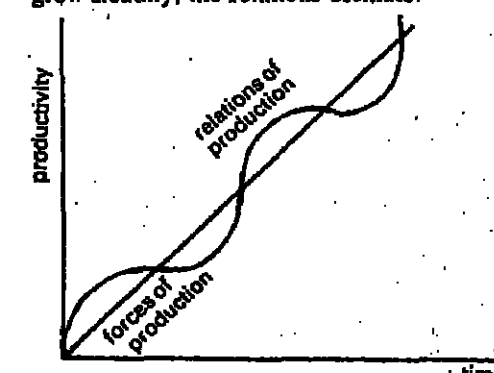
Loone's version requires co-ordination of appropriate elements at each level, big and large, but not at all times; moreover any level

can, quite independently, get out of step with the other two. What he insists on, however (thereby avoiding vacuity), is that if the form of organization at any level gets out of step with the other two, then either the other two follow suit before too long, or the dissident layer reverts to its previous condition, or the society in question disintegrates and ceases to exist. This formula on its own treats the three levels as of equal importance; but Loone goes on to add that changes of the non-dominant (ie, other than economic) layer can never be the full cause of the transition of a society from one type of social formation to another.

This looks as if the materialism were being watered down, but, as we shall see, that is not so. The refinement does, however, have an important consequence. It makes sense of politically initiated transformations, such as the October revolution, or the many socialist revolutions in under-developed countries since, in which a seemingly unripe country is propelled to a higher stage by its political rulers, rather than by changes internal to the productive layer. It makes an honest woman of such revolutions. The economy is deprived of its privilege of *initium*. The theory merely requires that the other layers follow the political initiative, which of course presupposes that they have at least reached a level where they are capable of doing so, or that the revolution fall and the polity revert to an appropriate earlier type, or that the society fall apart.

The main part of Loone's argument however concerns, in effect, the replacement of unilinealism by something more elastic, but not infinitely and vacuously so, and the specification of the underlying core mechanism, the deep structure, which would explain the new, non-unilinear pattern. In the interests of brevity, it will be best to begin with the deep, and follow on with the surface, though Loone, like a good novelist, maintains tension by doing it the other way round. It is at the deep level that one also sees that Loone's materialism is unalloyed and uncorrupted.

The deep motor of historical change lies in the intertwined relationship of two lines on a graph, one straight and one oscillating (rather like the snake and the staff of Aesculapius). The straight line represents the ever-growing forces of production; the snake the relations of production. The relations of production aid the forces (when the gradient of the snake is steeper than that of the line), or hamper them (when the snake is less steep than the line). The forces grow steadily; the relations oscillate.



Strictly speaking, the "relations of production" curve represents actual productivity, as it is under the joint impact of both the forces of production and the relations of production. The straight line gives us what Loone himself calls the "normal" effectiveness of productive forces (he himself uses the inverted commas). This presumably can only be worked out as some kind of average productivity of given technical equipment, over all the social relations with which it is compatible at any. (Tools on their own, unaccompanied by any "social relations", cannot produce anything.) Loone is not unaware of the enormous difficulties which would be involved in operationalizing such computations. It all assumes a measure of productivity of tool-systems independent of any one social form. He notes that in exceptional circumstances, the curved line can actually dip downwards, which means an actual decline in productivity, indicating a profound crisis in the mode of production within which this occurs. He does not say whether this is more liable to happen in the death agonies of an old mode, or in the birth pangs of a new one. Loone is familiar with the work of Imre Salusinszky, and must have reflected on the fact

Not surprisingly, the complexity of signs quickly invades *The Subject of Semiotics*. A patient, explanatory tone, badge of a promised "methodological guide", initially hints at a textbook mode. But textbooks are also texts, irrepressibly meaningful, and it soon becomes clear that a spirited and provocative argument has already engaged this one at its very inception. If signification (which is the subject of semiotics) cannot be conceived separately from the nature of the human subject who signifies, then the major concern of a work called *The Subject of Semiotics* must be as much with the first of its title's nouns as with the second.

Kaja Silverman's admirably thorough and lucid survey of the development of semiotics from Saussure and Peirce through to the recent work of Barthes, Derrida and beyond firmly establishes this point. As the concepts of discourse and symbolic order come to prove central to the study of signs, so that of subjectivity grows in importance. The work of Emile Benveniste in particular demonstrates its necessary linking and supportive role. If the sign is inseparable from discourse, discourse is inseparable from the subject and the subject from that array of signifying systems which constitutes a culture's symbolic order.

The ensuing account of subjectivity, of the human being as a site of consciousness in society, gives a central place to psychoanalysis through Benveniste's distinction between conscious and unconscious discourse and the provocative link that makes with the signifying processes described by Freud as primary and secondary. An argument which, in Freud's name, sees the two disciplines of semiotics, the study of signification, and psychoanalysis, the study of the subject, as "virtually synonymous" must also be drawn to the work of Lacan because of the central place he assigns to discourse, the symbolic order, and the constitution of the subject within it. Professor Silverman's meticulous unravelling of complexities in that sphere fuels her own argument that the "paternal" signifier has a major role both in the constitution and the constitution of the subject in Western society.

Rural ramifications

Roy Foster

SAMUEL CLARK and JAMES S. DONNELLY Jr
(Editors)
Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest
1780-1914
454pp. Manchester University Press. £19.50.
0719009650

The new Irish history has shown a commendable readiness to engage with conceptual questions, and the necessity of defining terms like "peasant" (or, indeed, "violence") recurs throughout this exceptionally ambitious and rewarding collection. But definitions are just a beginning, and in a trenchant conclusion the editors itemize an agenda for future research, emphasizing the need to explore the peculiarly Irish ramifications of agrarian unrest, collective action, "moral economies" and popular culture. In some areas, the gauntlet has been taken up since this book went to press; the call for investigation of "the instruments of repression and the technique employed by agrarian rebels to frustrate them", for instance, has just been met by Charles Townshend's *Political Violence in Ireland*. But the challenge holds good, and vindicates the vigour of a collection which adds up to far more than the usual academic ragbag.

The editors' achievement has been to provide a fairly rigid and coherent structure, which reflects their own preoccupations. James S. Donnelly's articles on agrarian unrest and his *Land and People of Nineteenth-century Cork*, and Samuel Clark's *Social Origins of the Irish Land War*, crop up repeatedly in the footnotes, along with crusading work by Paul Bew and David Fitzpatrick. The focus of the collection

is deliberately upon "relatively neglected subjects in Irish agrarian history, such as the impact of taxation, rural sectarianism, agrarian politics in Ulster, agricultural labourers, and the cleavage between graziers and small farmers."

The organization of the work emphasizes these themes. The first section, on "The Tradition of Violence", contains three striking essays: David Dickson on "Taxation and Disaffection in late eighteenth-century Ireland", a highly particularized study by Paul Roberts of Whiteboyism and faction-fighting in East Munster, and a marvellously wide-ranging piece on millenarianism by Donnelly. Dickson's work provides a new focus on unrest in the mid-1790s, by connecting support for the United Irishmen with "the convergence of new taxes, the cancellation of the grain-carriage bounties, the collapse in corn prices, the contraction of specie in circulation, and, in some counties, the escalation of cess rates": it is a deceptively short piece, of great lucidity and resonance. Roberts reconstructs the twilight world of gangs named "Caravats" and "Shanavests", by heroic quarrying in the State Paper Office. He illuminates class differences, among the peasantry at an earlier stage than usually considered; the world of Banim and Carleton is given historical depth and authenticity. Donnelly, also interested in Munster, relates sectarianism and Catholic millenarianism to Rockite violence, leaving some fascinating open questions regarding the transition to popular support for O'Connell.

Most of the issues aired in this section are encountered later in the collection—notably in David Jones's piece on graziers and peasants at the end of the century. This raises questions

posed by Bew's *Land and the National Question*, though some anomalies remain obvious (the 1879-81 Land War—surely in need of redefinition—is seen as waged against the graziers on page 381, but staffed by them on page 410). Nevertheless, Jones's ambitious attempt to identify a grazier class is of great importance in helping to define the sectional nature of the Irish rural community, as well as the Irish agricultural economy, after the Famine. The same can be said of John Boyle's piece on the Irish rural labourer (following a trail blazed by David Fitzpatrick). Here, revisionism of a kind now familiar peeps in: from 1883, the British state appears to have done more for the Irish labourer than ever the Land League did. (To their agenda for research, the editors should surely add a definitive study of the Congested Districts Board.) Most interesting of all is an essay on the Tralee Poor-Law election of 1881 by the late Bill Feingold, which demonstrates with tragic acuteness the loss to Irish history of a scholar who identified a splendid subject—the political education provided by the reorganized poor-law administration in Ireland—and treated it with flair. His study of the Land League's assault on the landed gentry, and the oddly equivocal nature of its support in North Kerry, is a model of elegant succinctness.

The middle section of the book deals with Ulster, and here the essays by David Miller, Bew plus Frank Wright, and Brian Walker concentrate on politics rather than agriculture. As the editors put it, "nothing has been or is so durable among all classes of northern Protestants as the fear of Catholic political domination; time and again since the seventeenth century, it has reduced economic interests to political irrelevance". This cuts both ways; Miller's

piece on Armagh in the 1780s and 1790s concludes that to contemporary Catholics the Volunteers "more closely resembled the 'B' Specials than a nationalist movement." Differentiation is the key, between Ulster and the rest of the island as well as within the northern community; issues like the Land Act of 1870, and the working of Griffith's Valuation, have to be interpreted separately for that intractable province. The Bew-Wright essay and Walker's piece revolve round the strange death of Ulster Liberalism—erratically nurtured, a sudden forced growth by the early 1880s, and then a withering in the bud. Walker convincingly relates this process to land politics, and confirms the picture of a mould that set hard in the cataclysm of 1885-6.

The strength of this volume, however, cannot be conveyed by an itemization of its contents; for what it provides is an incisive commentary on the newly-recognized landmarks of Irish agrarian history in the modern period, like the economic effects of the French Wars, the shift from pasturage to tillage and back to pasturage again, the regionalization of economic development, the sharpening of class differences within the peasantry, the social economics of shopkeeping, and the vexed issue of "modernization". (Joseph Lee's *Modernization of Irish Society*, a sparkling essay masquerading as a textbook, crops up in footnotes as often as any monograph.) The importance, even indispensability, of this achievement is compounded by exemplary editing: footnotes on the page, systematized bibliographies appended to each contribution, a weighty general introduction as well as an editorial conclusion (which is not above dealing an odd deft blow at some of the contributors).

Parliament and below

R. J. Morris

ERIC J. EVANS
The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870
457pp. Longman. £14.95 (paperback, £7.50).
0582489650

Eric Evans is a brave man to face the task of shaping the great mass of recent scholarship on the Industrial Revolution period into a manageable survey. The task is the more formidable because of the long line of distinguished books that jostle for attention on this section of the shelf, notably Asa Briggs's enduring *Age of Improvement*. So in 1983, how should the historian set about the job? Evans plunges somewhat breathlessly into the aristocracy and the politics of Pitt's country and then pushes through industrialization to the Second Reform Act beyond.

Political events and structures are central to this book. Evans studies social structures and changes, and to a lesser extent economic ones, with care, acknowledging them as a sometimes awkward backdrop to his judgments on the activities of the powerful, the politicians and other leaders of opinion. He is most assured in his discussion of politics, where with a delicate touch and telling detail, he shows the imperfections of a two-party system emerging from one of loose alliances and coalitions (his comment that two-party politics had a firmer reality at local level needs developing). There is a well-balanced account of reform, which shows that we are good on the short-run triggers of the 1830-32 crisis but poor on the long-term causes.

Towards the end of the book there are a number of finely worked chapters on different aspects of state involvement in social policy, where Evans nicely blends controversial points of view. He places the Benthamites as influential architects of the structure of state intervention even where other groups, like the Tory paternalists, were active as pressure-groups.

Many of his judgments on economic and social structure are welcome. He insists that the Industrial Revolution had many causes and incorporates many new perspectives on the labour force, drawing attention away from the steam-driven thousands in the factories to the tens of thousands who were agricultural labourers, domestic servants, casual labourers and hand-workers. Politics, religion and the aristocracy dominate. Evans is better on leisure than workplace relationships, which is perhaps a reflection of the current literature. More surprising, given his own interest in nineteenth-century feminism, there is little on family and gender relationships and nothing on the vital link of these to work and property. A most welcome feature of a book, clearly intended to supplement a variety of college and university courses, are the tables of key events and the compendium of information at the back. It is typical of many of the vices and virtues of this book that the section on the economy begins with a table of government revenue and not of population; national income or the structure of the labour force.

The book presents many problems, some of which will always haunt those who try to write social history in the widest sense by starting with parliament and working downwards. Evans's claim that "the development of early industrial Britain rested on two pillars, free trade and a new moral order" when writing of the years from 1780 to 1830, flies in the face of the evidence. Between 1790 and 1815 Russian bar-iron landed in London was usually cheaper than British-produced iron, and only the disruption of war in Europe and a massive protective tariff enabled British iron production to grow. Until the 1820s another tariff barrier protected Lancashire cottons. After the mid-1820s, however, Evans's judgment becomes relevant. Before 1830, the evangelicals are better presented as a gadfly pressure-group; their "new moral order" gained power only in the 1830s—*Pickwick Papers* (1836) was the last major English novel in which it was great fun to get drunk. Evans has a tendency to colour the early period with judgments valid only for later in the century.

His chapter on Ireland contains the odd claim that the urban Presbyterian leadership of the 1830s was a "new moral order". It is welcome must be a guarded one.

the 1798 rebellion in Ulster, by seeking an alliance with the Catholic peasantry and bringing along their French Enlightenment ideas, was somehow to blame for unleashing religious hatred. He acknowledges that the Orange Order was already in being among the weavers of demographic pressure, and of pressures on tenant farmers, not to mention the divisions between Episcopalian and Presbyterians. This reluctance to look for causes in the changing nature of economic relationships is a limitation which affects much of the book. Evans pays more attention to rising population than to "rapacious landlords and heartless farmers" in his discussion of the fortunes of the labour force, but he fails to ask how far that rise in population was engineered by new forms of wage labour which enabled the age of marriage to fall.

Even in the later chapters this same reluctance causes problems. Evans finds it "the supreme irony" that the age of economic liberalism should coincide with the growth of government. This is no irony at all, both were related to the same thing: the need to accumulate capital, to recruit and discipline labour, and to produce for profit with a changing technology. There is no such thing as a free market; all markets need structuring. A "free" market is simply one structured in a certain way, by financial legislation, company and trade union law and laws on debt. It required and still requires increasingly heavy spending to counter the tensions produced and to produce the infrastructure which the free market can never do without, whether it be sewers or low-income housing.

Evans's accounts of radicalism show a worrying tendency to belittle the many activities encompassed under that title. Radicals of the 1790s are dismissed as "no real threat" without any real analysis of the relationship between a leadership and its potential followers. He pays more attention to the failures of the post-1815 period than its successes, to "a few loonies with access to dynamite" (I think he means Thistlewood and the would-be assassins of Cato Street) rather than to the sober activities of men like Samuel Bamford who led his people to Peterloo. Cobbett is considered more for his undoubtedly high opinion of himself than for the equally undoubted inspiration and confidence he gave to many people to think about and act on political questions. The claim that history has not vindicated Tom Paine will not do. Since 1780, the middle classes, artisans, labourers and women have all been satisfied with winning representation and the vote instead of a more direct and possibly violent redistribution of power and property.

There is further awkwardness in Evans's discussion of class. Class consciousness is dismissed as "too crude and too misleading a concept", especially where the behaviour of working people is concerned yet he, happily, uses the language of class in other parts of his book, talking of "class leadership" and "class legislation", both of which involve conscious identity. He sees the importance of occupational and status identities but this does not remove the importance of class as an explanation of a variety of responses to trade union activity, and its suppression, as well as to political movements. Class feeling in this period was uneven, often ambivalent: its unity often experienced in families rather than occupational groups. The West Riding families interviewed by the Factory Commission included child factory workers, domestic weavers, street-traders, apprentice mechanics, often in the one household. In their relationships with employers working people were divided by "competition", which was the word they used to describe capitalism.

Once, social history was history with the politics left out. For many writers now, as here, social history begins with London-based politics and works its way out into the provinces and into other social relationships. Many of the difficulties of Evans's book derive directly and indirectly from this tactic. Despite the quality of judgment and information to be found in many individual chapters it is often hard to see the book as a coherent whole because Evans has never decided what it is actually about. It is a serviceable volume but, disappointingly, it turns away from the task of bringing a coherence of method and theme to the fragmenting literature of British social and political history.

The Chatsworth connection

F. M. L. Thompson

JOHN PEARSON
Stags and Serpents: The story of The House of Cavendish and the Dukes of Devonshire
233pp. Macmillan. £12.95.
0333 28454 2

Biography is a perennially fashionable and popular form of history, and however much academic purists may mutter or carp at its misleading, distorting, or dramatizing effects, they have to admit that it is the genre which does most to sustain a public interest in their subject. Biographies of entire families, however, unless they chance to be royal ones, are distinctly less common: indeed it is necessary to go back to the Victorians and their taste for stories about the great governing families of England to find the antecedents of John Pearson's book. Where the Victorians were sanctimonious and deferential, however, Pearson is candid and critical, and although he clearly admires all the members of the family, he equally plainly admires the scandalous, unconventional, or outrageous Cavendishes a good deal more than the dull and respectable ones. Any who fancy that this work is another symptom of a revival of Victorian values are therefore in for a shock: most of the Victorian Cavendishes were far from virtuous; and the moral of the whole story, if there is one, is that craftiness, intrigue, luck, and dissembling are rewarded with success, and that failure and disappointment await the sober, industrious, and abstemious.

The seventh duke, a perfect model of a virtuous high Victorian aristocrat, neatly illustrated the point. Desolated by the early death of his wife, he turned for consolation to religion, piety, austerity, and hard work. Deploring the feckless and extravagant ways of his predecessors, which had piled up enormous debts, he devoted himself to business affairs and the mission of improving the balance-sheet, allowing himself and his children few pleasures or indulgences. Successful in creating Eastbourne, an investment which in time paid handsome dividends, his much larger commitment to the development of Barrow-in-Furness was only temporarily successful. A boom town in the early 1870s, Barrow's steel and shipbuilding quickly ran into deep trouble in the 1880s. The duke poured in more and more money to shore up his companies there, to no avail, so that by the time he died in 1891 debts were larger than when he started and financial disaster loomed. It was left to his apparently indolent and unbusiness-like son to retrieve the situation by speedy liquidation of the industrial investments and some adroit stock exchange moves.

This son was the Harrington of the Gladstone cabinets and the Home Rule crisis, the last Whig Cavendish, at least until the present Duke joined the Social Democrats, and the most prominent public figure in the family since his ancestor had been rewarded with the dukedom for his part in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Harrington owed his political success, by this account, to the skill with which he exploited his ability to yawn at and during his own speeches: a studied air of indifference to issues and to power which earned him a reputation for being sound and reliable and brought him close to the premiership. There was more to his political position than that, but it makes a good story. An even better story is of the mayor of Coventry taking a bewildered Harrington to the town's bowling-alley during an official visit, because of his great love of skittles—Skittles was the nickname of the fashionable society prostitute, Catherine Walters, with whom Harrington had a notorious affair; the Prince of Wales is said to have planned the pun on an unsuspecting mayor. More enduring was his languid and easy-going, but faithful, affair with the Duchess of Manchester, whom he eventually married when she was widowed, perhaps the only man ever to have converted his mistress into a Double Duchess.

Although Pearson more than once emphasizes the adoption of middle-class manners and morals by the Victorian aristocracy, it is not altogether clear why the late Victorian Harrington and his early Victorian cousin, the sixth duke, who, a lifelong bachelor, had an almost

lifelong succession of openly acknowledged mistresses, should be regarded as less typical than the mid-Victorian seventh duke. Indeed, so far as the study of a single family can establish an aristocratic norm it is one of easy morals, culminating maybe in the extraordinary manage of the eighteenth-century fifth duke, his duchess Georgiana, the celebrated society hostess, and his mistress, Elizabeth Foster, by whom he regularly had children in alternate years and occasionally in the same year. It was a far cry from the Devonshire House set to the domesticated respectability of twentieth-century Chatsworth, and the great leap was not made until Devonshire House itself was sold, after the First World War.

Conclusions about the behaviour and outlook of a whole class, even a small and tight-knit one, cannot be based on the experience of one family, although social historians will find it convenient to have that summarized in this volume. It would be misleading, moreover, to give the impression that Pearson's attention is monopolized by the private lives of the Cavendishes. Rather, he gives a brief biography of every earl and duke, naturally adding Bess of Hardwick at the beginning, as the real founder of the dynasty, and throwing in cousin Henry Cavendish for good measure, who was not in the direct line but chanced to be an outstanding eighteenth-century natural scientist. These brief lives are attractively, at times racy, written, drawing on some of the personal papers and diaries from the Chatsworth archives as well as on secondary works, and it is the fault not of the author but of his subjects if some of them have precious little beyond their private lives to record.

Whether the task was worth undertaking at all is another matter. 400 years and fifteen generations of Cavendishes have probably produced marginally more figures of note and public importance than other grand families in the same league like the Cecils, Churchills, or Russells. But Pearson is not interested in exploring the question, nor in making any serious effort to substantiate his publishers' claim that this is "perhaps the most talented and most powerful family in English history", a statement which may depend, among other things, on when one supposes English history to have begun. Inevitably, many members of the family were pretty dull characters, and their public careers—unexcitingly routine rather than memorable, epitomized by the worthy Governor-General of Canada whose private diary was largely a series of weather reports; his wife at least was sufficiently odd to have nettles cultivated in the Chatsworth gardens for her nettle soup. All this is very far from amounting, as the dust-jacket proclaims, to "a history in miniature of England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II". It is on the contrary, what the author intended: a history of the occupants of Chatsworth, which chances two or three times to become involved with national events. Pearson imparts a sense of literary unity to his work by implying a Cavendish generational cycle alternating between the bold, imperious, and magnificent who frequently courted disaster; and the patient, scheming, and resilient, who survived and prospered. These are the stags, and the serpents, of the family coat of arms and of the book's title. A pleasing conceit, but a literary contrivance, not a piece of historical analysis. The unity lies rather in Chatsworth itself, and more of the life story of the house would have been welcome, and of the estates which made possible the prominence of the family and the splendour of the house. They lurk in the background, surfacing only when a duke happened to be personally absorbed by finances and estate management, as was the seventh; and there are tantalizing glimpses of the means by which the present duke and his agent have coped with death duties and rescued the family fortunes by a combination of deals with the Treasury and efficient estate management.

As it stands, the stream of visitors to Chatsworth, their historical curiosity newly aroused, will find much to their taste in this book. Macmillans, as befits a publisher connected by marriage to the Cavendishes, have gauged the country-house market to a nicety with an appropriately dual production on paper of a quality and weight which neatly balances the light touch of the text.

The old imbroglio

J. C. Beckett

OLIVER MACDONAGH
States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict 1780-1980
151pp. Allen and Unwin. £10.
0049410121

In this brief but stimulating and perceptive study of Anglo-Irish conflict over the past two hundred years Oliver MacDonagh presents a fresh view of a well-worn theme. His concern is not so much to re-examine the issues that have divided the two countries as to identify the attitudes ("states of mind") that have stood in the way of mutual understanding. At an early stage he sets out his purpose:

one of the leading tasks in any Anglo-Irish analysis—and not least the analysis of the imbroglio of the last decade and a half—is to search out and fix the different sets of assumptions and the different meanings attached to words and symbols by the generality of people in each tradition.

These assumptions and symbols are inherited from the past; and Professor MacDonagh very appropriately devotes his first chapter ("Time") to a discussion of Irish attitudes to history. It is, of course, a commonplace to say that for Irishmen the past is still present; and this is just as true of the Ulster Unionist as of the Irish Republican. But MacDonagh brings out and illustrates the much more significant fact that for Irishmen words and actions that, to an outsider, appear neutral may often have historical overtones that give them a powerful emotional significance.

Having dealt with "Time", MacDonagh turns his attention to "Place"; and in his second chapter he traces the emergence in the course of the nineteenth century of two conflicting ideas. One was the conviction that the "Irish nation" comprised the entire population, irrespective of ancestry or religious affiliation, and that this nation had an unchallengeable right to the whole island. The other, in which even the Roman Catholic population reluctantly acquiesced, was that the province of Ulster must be regarded as a Protestant preserve, and this despite the fact that at the time "Ulster" was no more than a geographical expression, without any administrative significance. MacDonagh's conclusion is that "the Northern Ireland of 1921 and later was in a real sense the product of geographical images" but

he might have added that this development was possible only because the "image" corresponded, more or less, with an actual state of affairs.

These chapters are followed by a third, on "Property", mainly taken up with an account of the conflict between traditional peasant views of land tenure and the law as administered by the courts. Together, the three chapters prepare the way for an examination of the political struggle leading up to the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, and its aftermath. He deals in four successive chapters with different types, rather than different stages, of political activity: "Politics pacific", "Politics bellicose", "Politics clerical", "The politics of Gaelic".

Together, these chapters provide a comprehensive survey of Irish nationalism as it developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Perhaps the least satisfactory is that on "Politics clerical": it is, for example, strange that Cardinal Cullen—certainly the most powerful ecclesiastical figure in nineteenth-century Ireland, and one who held strong views about clerical involvement in politics—should receive so little attention. But by way of compensation, as it were, the chapter concludes with a very useful discussion of the relationship

between constitutionalism and physical force in the nationalist movement.

Though this relationship presented a special problem for the clergy, in the long run all who supported the cause of national independence might at some stage be obliged to make a choice between civil and military action. Paradoxical as it may appear, it was the growing interest in Gaelic studies that did much, perhaps most, to make this choice inevitable.

The nineteenth-century revival of interest in Gaelic language and culture had provided an area of activity in which Irishmen of different religious and political views could co-operate freely in what they all regarded as a national cause; and for a long time the leadership was in the hands of Protestant scholars, most of them Unionists. But by the early 1900s the situation was undergoing a radical change: the Gaelic movement was becoming identified, in practice though not formally, with nationalism in politics and Catholicism in religion. The "state of mind" bred by this combination was aggressive and uncompromising: Ireland must be Gaelic, Catholic and free. MacDonagh does not go so far as to say that it was this attitude alone that led to the insurrection of 1916; but it is hard to see how it could have taken place

without the leadership of men inspired by these ideals.

It was, then, inevitable that from 1922 onwards successive governments in Dublin should be committed to a policy of "Gaelicization"; and MacDonagh discusses with insight and detachment the elements of ambiguity and ambivalence that inevitably appeared both in government policy and in the public response. His concluding sentence is neutral in form, but it might well be read as a warning: "Until—if ever—the day dawns when a junction of Northern Ireland and the Republic is seriously attempted, this sort of systematic ambivalence will doubtless continue its comparatively costless course."

In his final chapter, MacDonagh tells us that he has written this book in the belief that a study of past conflict should provide a guide to the settlement of contemporary problems; and he offers an elaborate comparison between the character of Anglo-Irish relations in the late eighteenth century and at the present time. Whether or not politicians on either side of the Irish Sea will accept the guidance he offers must be at best doubtful; but historians at least will be grateful for this illuminating study of Irish history during two eventful centuries.

ing his maiden speech in Irish—it was ruled out of order—but the early fire dimmed as O'Donnell turned into an establishment figure; becoming a barrister, dabbling in rubber and mine shares, interesting himself in libraries and railways, and supporting enthusiastically the war effort after 1914. In fine, he was typical of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the Redmond era, when Parnell's young tigers were mostly becoming tame pussy cats.

O'Donnell denounced the Easter Rising and his subsequent offers of help to the prisoners and internees were spurned; he was bitterly attacked by Sinn Féin in the subsequent period. After 1922 he disliked both Treatyites and anti-Treatyites as fervently as any Unionist, becoming a leading light of the National League, which sought a middle ground between Free State and Republican, and was chiefly attractive to the old Parliamentary Party men. Most of these were more anti-Republican than anti-Cumann na nGaedheal but O'Donnell, in his dislike of the Free State,

Tame tiger

Charles Davidson

J. ANTHONY GAUGHAN
A Political Odyssey: Thomas O'Donnell M.P. for West Kerry 1900-1918
275pp. Kingdon Books. 79, The Rise, Mount Merrion, Co Dublin.
0950601543

J. Anthony Gaughan is making something of a corner in biographies of minor but significant Irish politicians. Here, he turns to Thomas O'Donnell, son of an evicted tenant, schoolmaster, Gaelic League enthusiast and constitutional nationalist politician. O'Donnell was elected to Westminster in 1900, defeating another Home Ruler who was a Protestant landlord (a figure curious enough to warrant longer notice, the more so as Maurice Healy in *The Old Member's Circle* says that he was an Englishman). He attracted attention by mak-

The spirochetes of old

John Scarborough

MIRKO D. GRMEK
Les maladies à l'aube de la civilisation
occidentale
527pp. Paris: Payot. 160fr/F
2228550302

The symptoms are severe: fatigue, difficulty in breathing, vomiting, abdominal and back pains, fever and chills. An exposure to beans is part of the history, either ingestion or even the mere breathing of pollen. Death is an occasional result, especially among children under the age of six. This is how modern diagnostics describe favism, defined as an inborn error of metabolism, characterized by the role of glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency in its etiology. Mirko D. Grmek and his sources — both ancient and modern — show that Greeks and Romans knew favism, albeit in a far different manner, muffled by the well-known prohibition by Pythagoreans against the eating of beans. Similar collections of symptoms, as they would be termed today as contrasted with the Greek fashion of making a "sympptom" a disease, adduced in Greek mythology, poetry, pre-Socratic philosophy, the tracts contained in the Hippocratic corpus, Celsus, and other Greco-Roman sources, suggest that tuberculosis and leprosy were also observed, but defined in a way consistent with either the medical theories of classical antiquity, or according to descriptions common in poetry and folklore.

If Grmek had merely attempted to restate the role of disease in antiquity, or if his book simply reviewed the Greek and Latin sources on specific diseases and their presumed modern diagnoses, one would not afford it too much attention. In fact, however, it addresses the major questions of disease in antiquity in a fresh combination of current interpretations of paleopathologists, microbiologists, paleodemographers and anthropologists, coupled with close readings of the relevant Greek and Latin texts. Syphilis provides an excellent example of the success of Grmek's approach and methodologies: if one relies only upon Greek and Roman written accounts, tantalizing bits of evidence surface to show this affliction may have existed in classical antiquity; if one analyses the osteological evidence, there is enough proof to suggest that syphilis — or very similar diseases — did indeed flourish in ancient times; and if one assumes that the accounts of the "Neapolitan disease" or "French pox" as written in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries are the initial reports of syphilis in Europe, one can then assume (as do most secondary accounts) that the disease was introduced in 1493 by Columbus's returning sailors.

All assumptions derived from these three approaches are individually exclusive and yet none is completely false. Osteology shows that Europe was not "virgin territory" for syphilis in 1493, the classical sources suggest a possibility of syphilis among the Greeks and Romans, and the accounts of Oviedo, Fracastoro and others are reasonably accurate as far as they go. Is there a way out of this quandary? One can, of course, point to the commonly prescribed (for genital lesions) mercuric salves of medieval Arabic pharmacy, to suggest that syphilis was recognized and treated at least 500 years before Columbus set sail, but this is a weak circumstantial argument.

Grmek brings an additional modern technique to bear on the problem: evolutionary epidemiology. Paleo-osteology notes an occasional syphilitic periostitis, osteitis and periostitis gummosa, which give distinct lesions on the skull, clavicle, and the crest of the ilia. Sixteenth-century accounts are doubtless about syphilis. Classical descriptions of various genital ulcers could suggest late stages of syphilis. An approach linking all three types of evidence consists of analysis of the causative organism, spirochetes of the genus *Treponema*, especially *T. pallidum* which engenders both venereal syphilis and non-venereal syphilis (endemic syphilis, also called bejel, and yaws). *T. pertenue* which causes yaws (bubis, planis, framboesia), and *T. carateum* and *T. helveticum* which cause pinta (carate, mal del pinto) in man. As Grmek points out — using the definitive studies by Hackett (1963) and Hud-

son (1958) in particular — differential diagnosis among the three diseases is difficult, and structural variations under the electron microscope are minimal. Staining techniques are also unhelpful. Thus what one sees as "syphilis" in classical antiquity is most likely a mixture of descriptions that would include venereal and non-venereal syphilis, perhaps yaws, and possibly pinta. The probability that venereal syphilis was present among the Greeks and Romans is suggested by modern pathological theory and environmental influences, and there is little doubt that the *Treponema* spirochetes underwent a process of evolution of their own, as their human hosts migrated from Africa into the world at large.

Greek medicine has fascinated physicians and historians alike since the Renaissance, but classical scholars have only sporadically devoted their talents to it. Grmek demonstrates the reasons for this hesitation: one must come to the Greek texts not only with a sure command of classical philology but also with a clear understanding of what medicine means to do — and not to do — in its modern guises and analogies. Moreover, once the classical scholar has embarked upon the path to comprehending ancient medicine and its continual interweavings with philosophy and technical lore, there is a constant demand for creative

A life-line from the pancreas

Joan Austoker

MICHAEL BLISS
The Discovery of Insulin
304pp. Edinburgh: Harris. £15.
0862280567

More than half a million people in Britain alone suffer from some form of diabetes. The disease is characterized by the inability of the body to control the metabolism of glucose. Occurring in the young the effects of diabetes can be wide ranging, varying from weight loss, weakness, severe foot and leg infections, impotence and sterility, to blindness and renal failure. The onset of infections and other complications may lead to wasting of the flesh and, ultimately, death.

By the middle of the nineteenth century evidence associating diabetes with pancreatic function was beginning to accumulate. Pancreatic extracts were, in certain circumstances, capable of suppressing the appearance of glucose in the urine and dramatically relieving the onslaught of the symptoms of the disease. Zuelzer in Germany, Murlin, Scott and Kleiner in the United States and Paulesco in Romania had all, over a period of time, obtained active pancreatic extracts, but these were not pure enough to eliminate toxic side-effects and thus convince the medical world that the "internal secretion" of the pancreas had been obtained. The discovery of this secretion, insulin, at the University of Toronto in 1921-1922 was a dramatic event in the treatment of the disease. The impact of its discovery and purification was sensational. The lives of patients, once starved and sometimes comatose, were now radically altered by applications of this new "miracle drug". With the prospects of successful routine transplantation of the pancreas still only a remote and distinct possibility today, insulin remains the life-line of diabetics.

The team at Toronto, working in the laboratories of the Professor of Physiology, J. J. R. Macleod, comprised a young surgeon, Frederick Banting, a science student, Charles Best and a biochemist, J. B. Collip, who joined the group at a later stage to work on the purification of the extract. Banting was a shy, insecure young doctor with an unsuccessful practice in London, Ontario and no significant experience in physiological research. It was he who in 1920 had had "the idea" that ultimately led to the discovery of insulin, proposing to Macleod that by duct ligation and subsequent degeneration of part of the pancreas, one might obtain the internal secretion free from the external one which contained the powerful pancreatic digestive enzymes. Macleod, reluctantly agreed to give the rather unimpressive, articulate and inexperienced surgeon, a laboratory, some equipment and assistance for the

thinking. Simple equivalents are almost always false from ancient to modern, and the evidence from antiquity to fit modern preconceptions. An important aspect of the modern study of ancient medicine is the consideration of disease and the conception of disease in Greek and Roman medical theory, but too often the modern observer (physician, historian and classicist alike) is tempted into making "diagnoses" from scattered similarities in ancient descriptions to those of twentieth-century symptomatology. Almost all such diagnoses have flaws. For example, great uncertainty remains concerning the famous plague at Athens (430-429 BC), even though the leading contenders in the current literature are smallpox and endemic typhus. Both "diagnoses" do not quite fit the ancient evidence, particularly the description given by Thucydides. The debate continues among medical historians and classical scholars concerning our ability to designate diseases in antiquity, particularly those caused by bacteria or viruses, which have notoriously short genetic histories.

Les maladies signals a new approach to this problem. Grmek refuses to be held by any "modern" disease, however close an ancient illness might appear to be to it. He insists that we return to the Greek and Latin texts to see

summer of 1921. He did not place much faith in Banting's ability, for Banting lacked practical research experience and his textbook knowledge of the subject he was proposing to investigate was superficial.

From a wealth of untapped documentary evidence — manuscripts, laboratory notebooks and index cards — coupled with numerous interviews, Michael Bliss has succeeded in reconstructing the events of 1921 and 1922, thereby providing an almost daily account of the experiments carried out by Banting and Best. It gives a fascinating insight into the experimental methods of men who later won acclaim as great scientists for their work, portraying the random, arbitrary and somewhat haphazard manner in which they proceeded from one experiment to the next. Their progress and, more frequently, their setbacks are all meticulously detailed by Bliss with great clarity, in a manner easily accessible to the non-scientist. What Banting and Best did was not great science. It was not even good science. The results which they obtained were based on inadequate data, the experiments were uncontrolled and they constantly switched methods and concentrated on different aspects of the problem. The conception, execution and interpretation of their work was highly questionable and exposed them to much subsequent criticism. But they remained enthusiastic, inspired by Banting's vision, determination and unshakeable faith in his "idea".

When their work began to show some promise of a breakthrough and Macleod, aware of their deficiencies, brought in other scientists in an attempt to strengthen the team, the group became impossibly volatile. The insecure, nervous Banting became quite paranoid, convinced that his idea was being stolen. Bliss has unravelled the tensions, crises and acrimonious disputes which beset the work. It was only after Collip had succeeded in precipitating out the active principle and purifying and refining a non-toxic extract, that clinical trials could satisfactorily and safely be undertaken. The potential of insulin could now for the first time be appreciated. Bliss's vivid descriptions of how starved, Belsen-like apparitions were transformed into near normal human beings by applications of this "wonder drug" make one appreciate how much some of the rewards of modern science resemble the operations of magic or even miracle. The insulin story is one with all the ingredients of a scientific fairy-tale. The Nobel Committee, acting with uncharacteristic speed in the recognition of a great achievement (one recalls that Peyton Rous was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1966 for work carried out over fifty years previously) awarded the 1923 Prize for Physiology and Medicine to Banting and Macleod.

The decision to award the prize to members of the Toronto team was by no means un-

what they say, not what we hope they might say. His analysis of a number of ailments clearly shows a fluidity by the ancients in their diagnoses, a fluidity that suggests an overlapping in descriptions of entities of disease no longer used in modern diagnostics. Occasionally, the combinations of several scientific approaches (epidemiology, osteology, etc) with classical philology allow a closer approximation of "what it was", as in the case of syphilis, and a sensitive reading of the ancient texts can produce a reasonable conclusion, as in the examples of favism, tuberculosis, and leprosy.

Les maladies is a most important monograph, and medical historians should ponder its major points and collected evidence with great care. In a lucid, deft and assured style, Grmek has posed an essential problem in the History of Medicine: the analysis of basic differences between ancient and modern medical systems. By focusing our attention on the differences, rather than the similarities, through a series of shrewdly perceived modern techniques fused with solid classical philology, *Les maladies* not only indicates how medical historians can gain a better understanding of ancient diseases in their historic contexts, but also why medicine in antiquity reveals far more than a narrowly boxed world of professional physicians plying their trade.

mous, but the Committee was swayed by the recommendation of August Krogh, the Danish Nobel Laureate, who had visited Toronto the previous year to study insulin as the guest of Macleod. It was Krogh who persuaded it of the great practical importance of the discovery and of Macleod's share in the work. Krogh might have been convinced of his friend's contribution, but Banting was outraged when informed of the award. A fairy-tale ending it was not to be. Banting was incensed that Macleod should have received any acclaim and in an outburst of indignation and rage he accused him of being deceptive, self-seeking and unscrupulous, of stealing ideas and credit. Banting immediately announced that he would share his prize with Best. Macleod retaliated by agreeing to share his prize with Collip. Banting's hatred of Macleod endured for the rest of his life.

There is considerable debate about the apportioning of credit for the discovery of insulin. Insulin, after all, did not emerge as a totally unexpected discovery in Toronto in 1922, but rather as the culmination of years of investigation by many scientists. As Bliss has clearly shown, others did have active pancreatic extracts, but these had not yet been purified sufficiently for them to be clinically effective. He has done an excellent historical job in accumulating a voluminous amount of documentary evidence and in portraying the complex, controversial and dramatic events which took place in Toronto. It comes as a disappointment, therefore, that in the end he seems to be seduced, as was August Krogh, by the striking clinical applications of the discovery, attributing all credit to the Canadian team for the achievement. But there are too many unanswered questions about the discovery for one to honour only the Canadian group.

Why, for example, did Banting and Best not only misrepresent but totally distort the work of Paulesco in their first publication in 1922? Why are there so many disparities between the charts and the text in this same paper? And why is it that their second major paper contains no less than eighteen factual errors in the presentation of their results when compared with those in their original notebooks? One recalls too that Banting's great "idea" that of duct ligation, played no essential part in the ultimate discovery. A British physiologist produced a scathing critique of Banting and Best's work in the *British Medical Journal* of 1922, arguing that "the production of insulin originated in a wrongly conceived, wrongly conducted, and wrongly interpreted series of experiments". There was much truth in this devastating criticism. Whatever the random successes of science, it is wrong to assume that good science, miracle cures and high ethical standards have any necessary connection with each other.

On behalf of the oppressed

Patrick McCarthy

J. E. FLOWER
Literature and the Left in France: Society, politics and the novel since the late nineteenth century
256pp. Macmillan. £20.
0333 19881 6

J. E. Flower's book contains a mass of information and should interest a wide range of readers. He offers a fresh look at *Germine Lacerda*, which may have been the first novel about the working class, and delves into Henri Barbusse's newspaper, *Monde*, which influenced so many young left-wingers between the wars. The forgotten Pierre Hamp, author of a vast novel about railway workers called *Le Rail* (1921), is resurrected, while the merely neglected Roger Vailland, who must have been one of the most unlikely converts to Communism, is sympathetically examined.

Inevitably *Literature and the Left in France* has the defects of its merits but it is surprising to discover that a book with such a title contains virtually nothing on Malraux or Camus or no discussion of Sartre's novels or plays. Professor Flower's study is divided into three chunks: the working-class novel from the Goncourts to 1914; the same novel between the wars along with the debates about committed literature; a chapter on three post-war Communist novelists: Vailland, André Stil and Pierre Courtade.

He does well to re-examine the novels of Charles-Louis Philippe, whose early death in 1909 prevented him from becoming, as Gide had hoped, a pillar of the *NRF*. It might have been worth setting Philippe in two overlapping contexts: as a working-class novelist alongside Emile Zola, author of *Le roman expérimental* (1904), and Marguerite Audoux, authoress of *Marie-Claire* (1910), and as part of the *NRF* network; Philippe's work was admired by Claudel and Gide as well as by his neighbour Valéry Larbaud. Flower traces Philippe's evolution and correctly dwells on *Le Père Perdrix* (1902) and on *Croquis* (1906), which are better novels than the more famous *Bubu de Montparnasse* (1901), but he is rather too quick to dismiss Philippe as resigned and sentimental.

Improving truths

Anne Whitmarsh

TERRY KEEFE
Simone de Beauvoir: A study of her writings
247pp. Harrap. £6.30.
0245 52924 1

Any worthwhile study of Simone de Beauvoir's works must face the fact that their quality is extremely uneven, both in literary terms and in the interest of their content. Terry Keefe does not evade the issue and his book is admirable for its refusal to ignore her faults and for its recognition of those virtues which have justly won her an audience of devoted readers over so many years. In his wish to be fair, his characteristic procedure is to point out the value of a particular book or passage and to balance that, immediately or later, with critical remarks. Judgments which are potentially damaging — although he never presses the point that for alternate with positive comments, even occasionally extravagant praise.

Keefe has produced a very competent guide to Beauvoir's published works, which should prove a useful reference-book for students. If it drags a little when read straight through, this is in part because much of Beauvoir's writing tends to be tedious when consumed as a continuous diet and also because the present book is organized as a collection of explanations, appreciations and criticisms, put together on a rather ad hoc basis. Keefe examines and comments on the books one by one, in three groups: autobiographical writings, essays and fiction (this last, long section is particularly good on the techniques she employs with varying success). If Beauvoir is to be considered a major literary figure then Keefe's approach, which fails to explore many aspects of her life and thought, is possibly justifiable. Even so, such a deliberate limitation makes

It is hard to see why a writer from an oppressed social class that had no prospect of attaining hegemony should not be fatalistic (although in Philippe's case it may also have been the influence of Thomas Hardy) and surely the striking feature of these novels is the abortive series of revolts such as Bubu's Nietzschean pose or Croquis's brief period of extravagance. Certainly both Philippe and Audoux were sentimental but the *NRF* was willing to forgive them because in recounting working-class life from the inside they were introducing into the novel lyricism and fantasy. Alain-Fournier learnt much from them, as he shows in *Le Miracle de la ferme* (1910). Moreover, his stance of the Goncourts suited one of the *NRF*'s great preoccupations, the multiple point of view. In *Croquis* Philippe shifts from inside to outside his hero and from simple to more sophisticated language. This offers parallels with the switches of point of view which Gide had deployed in his journal novels and which Larbaud attempted in *Fernine Mérieux* (1911).

The second section of Flower's book is the best and he takes us carefully through the debates about socialist realism. The notion that literature should offer positive proletarian heroes and depict the triumphs of socialism owed more to the Communist movement's need for propaganda than to a serious study of Marx. Since French society had remained resolutely bourgeois, literature could hardly do otherwise. The various manifestations of commitment were themselves a reflection of social reality, namely, the gradual conversion of one segment of the cultured middle classes to left-wing views.

Such conversions found expression, for example, in the review, *Commune*, and in the "maisons de culture" which it set up. Camus's early theatre experiments took place in the Algiers "maison de culture" and were designed to replace the existing "bourgeois" relationship between actors and audience by a relationship that was both more intense and more critical. Camus might also have found a place in this book as a working-class writer. From *L'Envers et l'endroit* via the character of Grand in *La Peste* and on to *Les Mots* he depicts working-class people from a viewpoint tinged with both sentimentality and fatalism.

that many of the issues raised in the book cannot be satisfactorily pursued. If her significance is seen as other than purely literary, then clearly a much wider frame of reference is essential.

For Beauvoir, writing has always been a question of taking her own experience and transmuting it. In this way she finds fulfilment and at the same time justification for what she is doing because she seeks as a witness to unmask the truth about the world and thus to improve it. Essentially it is the communication between author and reader which is important, being highly personal, confidential and rewarding for both.

This raises various problems. The preoccupation with recreating herself and her life in books means that her autobiographical volumes contain much that is frankly banal, while in her fiction, given her lack of creative imagination, it leads to an over-reliance on autobiographical sources. And then, what is "the truth"? Her absolute conviction about the rightness of her own point of view, and unwillingness to admit any other, hardly allow an impartial account of the world, although there is an interesting dichotomy between the "certitudes intellectuelles" expressed in her essays and the understanding she displays in her fiction of the complexities and ambiguities which make hard and fast rules impossible. As for the reliability of her autobiographical works as a factual record, Keefe is right to question this, for it is clear from reading between the lines or referring to other sources that much is omitted, glossed over or misrepresented. He is somewhat naïve about the degree of detachment Beauvoir displays towards herself, but this may be a tribute to the insistent self-analysis which has enabled so many to identify with her failings, doubts, fears, joys and sorrows, and thus create that rapport which she so prizes.

Contradictory tendencies

Carol Blum

GEOFFREY BRENNER
Order and Chance: The Pattern of Diderot's Thought
264pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.
0521 25000 0
PETER FRANCE
Diderot
116pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95
(paperback. £1.95).
019 287551 5

These two new books bear witness to Diderot's continuing capacity to arouse speculation while avoiding definitive evaluation. Geoffrey Brenner offers a potentially powerful if ultimately flawed argument: that Diderot is not as strangely modern as he has been said to be, being "unable to escape from a dualist way of thinking of which, in one sense, he was unaware" and this because of the "epistemological limits of eighteenth-century thought". Thus he could not rival "the achievement of later thinkers like Hegel, Marx and Darwin", who were able to "integrate the concepts of evolution and progress into the structure of the world itself. . . . for Diderot the antimony of the two substances, whether envisaged as perfection and change, order and chance, thought and extension or truth and reality, could not be resolved. All the elements were present which might have made Diderot a modern except one."

Brenner's view of the relation between the antitheses spawned by Diderot's thought produces some illuminating insights: for example, he links the contradiction of competitive and sympathetic feelings towards someone else coexisting within the same person with Diderot's dual vision of matter in its downward, disintegrating phase and "its upward trend when awakened to sensibility. It is a vision which reinterprets the concept of the Fall and Redemption in material terms and yet preserves its structure and its tensions." But Brenner's insistence that these dualistic patterns be seen as barriers to a "modern" sensibility leaves him defining a modernity rooted in the nineteenth century. If Marx, Hegel and Darwin all (arguably) transcended the antithetical nature of Diderot's thought, this was as appropriate to their age as the *philosophes'* tendency to polarization was to theirs. Moreover, Brenner's claim that modern

science has buried the old mind/body problem is hardly accurate.

Diderot's capacity not merely to entertain contradictions but to reveal in them — and to use writing as a way of forcing others to a disturbing awareness of them — provides the generative thrust of his work. Brenner mentions Lester Crocker's *Diderot's Chaotic Order* (1976) in his introduction but he does not confront Crocker's analysis of the very question which he himself raises. In Crocker's words: "the two dialectical opposites are one, and there is no way to extricate the question from the categories of the mind or to separate it from the subjectivity of the perceiving individual." Brenner neither confirms nor contradicts this. He does, however, attribute to Diderot a position which was not that of the mature philosopher. Diderot struggled all his life with the crucial relation of action to ethics, and Brenner argues from his separation of "sensibility" from reason to the conclusion that his "conception of consciousness excludes movement, just as it excludes the possibility of an ordered self being an active participant in the world it perceives. It would seem then that however much Diderot was committed to reform, to positive beneficent action, he was unable to evolve a philosophy to encompass it." But Diderot's eventual vision of the "sage" was his highly individualistic doctrine emphasizing the moral primacy of action: "It is not the thoughts, it is the acts which distinguish the good man from the wicked one", and this division between the inner, irresponsible self and the outer, socially accountable being was central to much of his later thinking.

Peter France's *Diderot*, an addition to Oxford's Past Master series, offers a brief survey of the life and works from the refreshingly stringent viewpoint of someone who is clearly not enthralled by his subject. Professor France begins by pointing out that "we are familiar with Voltaire and Rousseauists, but there are no Diderotians or Diderotists" and concludes by observing that it is "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a man with a message, who still speaks to readers with a greater intensity than we find in Diderot". The numerous Diderot enthusiasts whose existence France denies may be discomfited by the rather short shrift accorded their master's most daring intellectual developments; for the non-specialist, however, the book provides a useful introduction to the essential writings of Diderot and the pervasive tendencies of his tantalizing mind.

Getting it right

P. M. Wetherill

G. BONACCORSO and others
Corpus Flaubertianum I: Un Coeur Simple
585pp. Paris: Belles-Lettres.
2251 36102 2

For a long time it was claimed that Flaubert's manuscripts were illegible. However, since Marie-Jeanne Durry's studies of his unpublished projects, and the appearance of such volumes as *Flaubert à Coeur Simple* and *Etudes de critique génétique* (1980 and 1979), critics have come more and more to exploit the manuscripts as a massive and perfectly accessible source for the way Flaubert wrote his novels. G. Bonaccorso's monumental edition of all the available MSS of *Un Coeur Simple*, which includes many photographs, now makes it possible for the first time to examine the true nature of the writer's literary thinking in its exhaustive complexity. The presentation is chronological: plan, first notes on characters, scenarios, résumés, detailed plans, drafts, fair copies. Through this, one witnesses the whole dynamic process of deletion and insertion, and the replacement and shifting of material. At the same time one can see how the different stages overlap, as various levels of writing (documentary, "stylistic") occur on the same page.

The manuscripts also offer objective evidence of the way Flaubert defines the nature of his task. The strategy is local rather than global: "une phrase résumant toute sa vie"; "écrire d'un mouvement très vite"; "différencier le caractère des enfants"; "que cet épisode soit une narration autant que possible"; the end of

the story is to be written in "une phrase très longue" — like all the high points in *Un Coeur Simple*. What is significant here is the extent to which Flaubert's preoccupation is specifically with writing: the drafts make up by far the most extensive stage. But the writing is not empty — it treats the story-line in a very specific way. On the one hand, Flaubert tightens up thematic references, especially by strengthening the ironic links between parrot, nephew and Holy Ghost, and by underlining the notion of communication. On the other hand, one sees him removing precise dates and blurring the topography, social detail and psychological data. The "full", explicative, Balzacian drafts, which Flaubert sets down only, in a sense, in order to work against them, are turned into a very different kind of writing. Only the manuscripts can show how Flaubert becomes the modern writer he is.

His modernity is there too in the way the text echoes not so much external "reality" as other texts by Flaubert himself and by others. Embedded in the MSS, and thus potentially present in the final version, are echoes of *Madame Bovary*, *L'Education sentimentale* and even of *L'Assommoir*. When writing, Flaubert is characteristically rewriting, as the ten or so draft versions of each section prove. It would be difficult to grasp the true complexity of this process without the admirable volume Professor Bonaccorso has produced.

Before Marx: Socialism and Communism in France, 1830-48, edited by Paul E. Corcoran (237pp. Macmillan. £25. 0 333 31498 0), presents writings on socialism by largely unknown writers active in the mid-nineteenth century.

Double exposures

T. A. J. Burnett

JOHN CARTER and GRAHAM POLLARD
*An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain
Nineteenth Century Pamphlets: Second edition
with an epilogue*
Edited by Nicolas Barker and John Collins
441pp. Scolar.
NICOLAS BARKER and JOHN COLLINS
*A Sequel to An Enquiry into the Nature of
Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets by John
Carter and Graham Pollard:
The Forgeries of H. Buxton Forman and
T. J. Wise Re-examined*
394pp. Scolar. £65 per two-volume set.
083967 6390

Thomas James Wise. President of the Bibliographical Society, Member of the Roxburghe Club, Honorary Fellow of Worcester College, book-thief and forger, was born on October 7, 1859, in Gravesend, the son of another Thomas Wise, variously described as "Manufacturing Jeweller", "Pencil Case Maker", "Independent" and "Tobaccoist". After an elementary education he gained the post of office boy with the firm of Herman Rubenck, Essential Oil Merchants. Shortly thereafter he was dismissed. He was, however, reinstated, and the episode proved to be the only hiccup in a career that led both to the honours listed above and to the position of managing director of his firm. The only hiccup, that is, until in 1934 two young booksellers, John Carter and Graham Pollard, published a work with the arresting title *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*. In this they proved that a series of highly collectable little first editions of nineteenth-century writers were spurious, and although the laws of libel discouraged any overt accusation, in every case the trail appeared to lead to Wise. The great man hid behind his lawyers and his doctors, his influential friends rallied to his support and he was able to stave off positive disaster until, three years later, he slipped into an unhonoured grave. His widow and executors sold his library for £66,000 to the British Museum, who were glad to have the opportunity of filling many gaps in their collections. They were less glad when they discovered that in several cases leaves had migrated from their own copies of rare, and genuine, first editions into Wise's previously imperfect ones. To the

piratical and, viewed in a certain light, humorous title of forger (everyone enjoys seeing the experts humbled) was added the wholly despicable name of book-thief, sophisticated of rare volumes, destroyer of irreplaceable evidence. To exploit the greed and gullibility of collectors was one thing. To display total contempt for the priceless texts which he pretended to revere was quite another.

It is ironic that Wise's only real contribution to bibliography was in provoking the work that unmasked him. He himself was uneducated, careless and dishonest. In the catalogue of the collection which he sold to John H. Wrenn, a Chicago millionaire, no less than seventeen per cent of the attributions are deliberate frauds. Wise's own bibliographies can never be trusted. The work produced by Carter and Pollard, on the other hand, revolutionized the discipline. Wise had come to realize that several nineteenth-century writers had had individual poems or essays printed off in little pamphlets, perhaps to protect copyright, perhaps in order to see how a particular work would look in print. Printing was very cheap, and this procedure was analogous to having something typed up cleanly. Wise's contribution to the history of forgery had all the simplicity of genius. Instead of trying to reproduce existing pamphlets, with all the attendant dangers of comparison, he had printed "creative" forgeries, pamphlets which had no original but which bore dates earlier than those of the true first editions, and thus displaced them in the esteem of collectors. By abusing his position as Secretary of the Shelley Society, Wise had accustomed a reputable firm of printers, Richard Clay and Sons, to producing facsimile reprints of rare Shelley items dated, naturally enough, as the originals. Clays therefore saw nothing wrong in dating other pamphlets earlier than the actual year of printing, and in trying to match earlier types and styles.

In order to prove the fraudulent nature of Wise's productions, Carter and Pollard had to invent new techniques on three different fronts: the dating of papers by their method of manufacture; the dating of printed works and the identification of their printers by noticing unique or unusual features in the fonts of type employed; and the close analysis of texts. Innovations in paper manufacture and in the design of types, and revisions made by authors in their works, could each or all together prove

that a pamphlet could not have been printed before a certain date. Identification of a printer by his founts could link the forgeries with a printer known to have been extensively used by Wise.

Not only did Carter and Pollard introduce these brilliant innovations to the bibliographer's armoury, but they also set forth their findings in a way which makes of *An Enquiry* a truly gripping narrative of mystery and investigation. As an acute critic quoted in the present work pointed out, it was appropriate that *An Enquiry* "should have appeared during the golden age of the detective story . . . Mechanical wood pulp is made to seem as incriminating as blood-stains, and much is made of picturesque detail, like the kerness 'f' in Shanks's Long Primer No. 20, and its alien question mark." It is, therefore, good news that a reprint of *An Enquiry* has now been published. There is, however, a great deal more to it than that. Carter and Pollard realized that their identification of the types used for Wise's most famous forgery, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 1847, as those used by Richard Clay and Sons, the printers most frequently employed by Wise for his legitimate printing work, was largely the result of luck. Pollard set to work to elaborate a method of identifying printers scientifically from the types they used. Moreover, as early as 1935 it became clear that Wise had not been alone in his fell work, but had collaborated with another eminent bibliophile, Harry Buxton Forman, who may indeed have been the inventor of the "creative" forgery. The nature of that collaboration, and the attribution of various forgeries to either of them or to both, remained to be elucidated. Then again, further pamphlets were put forward as candidates for the roll of dishonour, and had to be tested. For Carter and Pollard their classic publication remained a work in progress, and what with the distractions of the war and their careers, and the fact that they were for long embroiled from using the vital evidence that implicated Buxton Forman, by the time of their deaths the long-awaited second edition of *An Enquiry* had not appeared.

Carter and Pollard's papers passed to Nicolas Barker and John Collins. At first they hoped that they could use four draft chapters to complete a second edition, compiling further dossiers to cover additional and newly dis-

covered fraudulent publications, and adding a few paragraphs to the last two draft chapters, "Hurry Buxton Forman" and "The Collaboration". As Barker and Collins got deeper into the material, however, they found, as so often happens with scholarly research, that there was so clear-cut or unambiguous as it seemed and that Carter and Pollard's conclusions concerning the collaboration could not be sustained. With commendable integrity they realized that their best course would be to leave *An Enquiry* as it stood, adding notes where necessary, and in another volume to be upon it. Their decision has produced a satisfying book, but a great deal more than one. *A Sequel* cannot be read without reference to, and knowledge of *An Enquiry*, as is far less entertaining. It contains, however, an immense amount of valuable research, what will perhaps prove even more valuable points the way to further work remaining to be done.

An Enquiry listed forty-seven fraudulent, highly suspect publications. *A Sequel* added another fifty pieces dishonestly reduced. Not only does this show the extent of what for Wise and Forman was a profitable business, it also reveals the breadth of the activities and how hard it is to separate the forgeries, piracies, false limited edition hybrid publications part genuine, part fake more or less honest book-dealing, all were for their mill. To have these dishonest publications certainly identified will be of inestimable value to the editors of the authors concerned. Historians of printing will find much to push in the section devoted to typography, for though the authors are driven to conclude that they cannot safely tell one forger's hand from the other's by that means, and that although they can say when a piece was not printed they cannot say when it was.

Perhaps, however, the most valuable contribution of this book will be to remind us that the world will always contain Wises and Buxton Formans. Forgers will forge, and "invent" men will bluster and bully to protect their reputations. Respected scholars of wrench the evidence to make it fit their hypotheses, and booksellers will sophisticate the works they would have us believe they know. The farcical story of Hitler's Diaries should remind us that the lives of Buxton Forman and Wise still provide a cautionary tale while moral we ignore at our peril.

Watson and his helpers are to be congratulated on having done such a splendid job.

This volume covers collections in the alphabetical sequence from Lampeter to Oxford, and nineteen of them fall into Ker's category of "larger collections", ie, those with fifty or more medieval books in manuscript. One of these is, of course, the Bodleian Library, for which he simply provided a guide to the Library's own catalogues; but for the others (sixteen Oxford Colleges, Lincoln Cathedral and the John Rylands University Library of Manchester), Ker made descriptions of those manuscripts for which a catalogue is not already available in print. Besides these nineteen larger collections some fifty-four others are covered, ranging from the sizeable accumulations of, for instance, the Universities of Liverpool and Leeds and of Chetham's Library, to single items at Queen Elizabeth's School for Boys at Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, and the Vicar's Library at Marlborough, Wiltshire.

All are described by use of the clear and concise conventions developed in Volumes One and Two, a method which—as one came to expect from the rigorous and scholarly master—covers every aspect of a manuscript's text, make-up, decoration, script, physical shape and provenance. Nowhere is this seen better displayed than in the missal made at the turn of the fourteenth century and owned in the sixteenth by Richard Fitzjames, Bishop of London: a manuscript which was bought at the Harmsworth sale in 1949 and is now in the parish church of Minehead, Somerset, where Fitzjames had been vicar from 1485 to 1497. It is a missal which can be dated to within a few years of its completion.

There was a very real danger that the sheer cost of printing this sort of catalogue would push the price of Volume Three beyond the pocket of most individuals (and indeed, some libraries) who needed it. It is very gratifying to be able to report that the price has been kept within bounds because of most generous subvention from the British Library Board towards the costs of publication. It is good news too that a further gain from that body is enabling Alan Piper to go through the materials left by Ker and to select what work remains to be done. Volume Four, which in 1982 Ker thought would occupy him for a further five years. The present Manuscripts Advisory Committee of SCONUL then have to consider what it can do to bring the project to completion. As Andrew Watson says in his Introduction to this volume, "it is unthinkable that this astonishing monument to Ker's learning, vision, persistence and courage, and, indeed, sheer courage, should be left incomplete."

Exterminating agents

Patricia Craig

RUTH RENDELL
The Killing Doll
237pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
009 1554802
JAIN BANKS
The Wasp Factory
184pp. Macmillan. £7.95.
0333 363890

When she isn't writing plain detective fiction, with efficient Inspector Wexford to lay the wrongdoers by the heels, Ruth Rendell specializes in psychotic goings-on in the ill-appointed bedsitters and drab family homes of the inner London suburbs. Her latest novel, of this type, starts with a memorable piece of hocus-pocus: Pup (Peter), fifteen, whose mother is dying, and whose sister Dolly (Doreen) has a blemish in the form of a naevus on her cheek, sells his soul to the devil in a makeshift ceremony diffidently performed in the sodden tunnel of a disused railway near his home. To Pup, this action is more a joke than anything else, though it's the prelude to an enthusiasm for the occult, which briefly adds interest to his life, before going the way of commoner adolescent obsessions like football or stamp-collecting. It's a matter of greater import to Dolly, who needs to believe in her younger brother's powers; Dolly's increasing battiness leads her to fasten on the supernatural as a source of authority and hope. She starts attending séances, and soon produces a row of dolls — she's a dressmaker by profession — of which one at least is an effigy of an enemy. The usual business with pins ensues, but it isn't until Pup is persuaded to disembowel the doll that an outcome satisfactory to Dolly is effected. Myra,

the couple's vulgar young stepmother, is found dead after an accident with a syringe.

The climax of Dolly's career as an exterminator, which began modestly enough with her neighbour's cat, is yet to come. In the meantime, her senses deranged by drink and brooding, she exhibits mannerisms peculiar to the sad and spinsterish, eventually manufacturing a couple of private spectacles for herself, her mother and stepmother, who address her exactly as they did in life: "To be perfectly honest, you ought to do it, Doreen." The effect of this pair of comic chimeras is to lighten the atmosphere of seediness and degeneracy in which the characters, like all those devised by Ruth Rendell for a particular purpose, are located. The purpose is to construct a pattern of converging neuroses, with a deadly occurrence at the point of impact. As a counterpart to disfigured Dolly, in the current novel, we have a schizophrenic Irishman with the colourful name of Diarmait Bawne. Two terrorist bombs, one in Co Armagh and one in Belfast, have done for Diarmait, depriving him of even the inadequate wish he started out with (allusion to Northern Ireland is rapidly becoming a literary device for signalling destructiveness and disease). Now, some years after these unfortunate events, he has come insecurely to rest in a street not far from the home of Pup and Dolly. There is little to Diarmait apart from his butcher's equipment, the tools of his past trade.

Ruth Rendell cannot be faulted in the area of technical ingenuity, and her assurance and boldness are equally remarkable. Her novels are clever and engrossing; however, there is something a little workaday and uneloquent about their narrative style, which hampers the production of a genuine *frisson*, and allows an opening for lurid feeling instead.

Lookers-on

Anisa Davis

NAMITA GOKHALE
Paro: Dreams of Passion
160pp. Chatto and Windus. £7.95 (paperback, £3.50).
07011 27708

The Romance of India, seen from afar, has settled through fiction and expensive television into a composite of wonderful trains, infinite horizons and inland Mughal marble. The concentration is on the India of the Raj, predominantly rural, with a teeming cast. Namita Gokhale's first novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, has Indian Romance all right, but of a very different sort. Set in the stylish and striving sections of Bombay and New Delhi, it pursues a tight group of characters who are inescapably the product of their place and time: post-Independence, urban, westernized, wholly Indian.

Rebecca, Mills and Boon and a touch of *Jane Eyre* are the preferred reading of Priya, the first-person narrator of the book. Formative reading, too. Priya has the second Mrs de Winter in mind for herself ("I had always considered myself a person of little consequence and less talent"). She is in love both with the Maxim figure, the sewing-machine magnate who was once her boss ("the Housewife's Friend" in more ways than one) and his voluptuous, overpowering first wife, Paro. The significant differences are that Paro is still very much in evidence, in ample flesh as well as in spirit, and that Priya never gets to marry her hero, only to be his intermittent mistress.

Priya is a voyeur, a conniving observer who records what she sees, even if the view contradicts her dream visions. Just as the Indian exposition of sex seems compendious to the outsider, taking in the separate evidence of the Khajuraho temple sculptures, women's public modesty and Olivia Newton John in hot pants in the in-flight movie, so Priya's accounts are all-embracing, describing come-uppances rather than giving judgments. Her covert diarist's eye is sharp on the precise delineation of status, aspiration, influence and wealth: formica and vinyl chairs in the office where the secretaries ask eagerly "Is It Arranged or Love?", rose-embroidered tray cloths and a record of *The Rite of Spring* in Priya's boss's flat (the crochee radio-cosy in her mother's one).

room where her brother (MD failing) tunes into "A Date with You".

The richest material for Priya's observation comes in the vicinity of Paro, whose appetite for life and sex leads her via cricketer princes, state ministers and Greek film directors, through gratifying quantities of glamour and degradation. The route is marked by noisy scenes in restaurants and untidy tries for suicide ("Suresh testified that she had accidentally slashed her wrists in an attempt to open a tin of baked beans. The policeman seemed quite satisfied").

Many of the book's characters start a sentence beginning "The whole trouble with India is . . .". They finish it not only with different com-

Like minds

Neville Shack

MAGGIE BROOKS
Loose Connections
173pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
£7.95 (paperback, £3.50).
07011 2802X

Take three girls who assemble a Jeep to drive to Munich. Subtract two of them: one defeated by her paranoid husband, the other crushed by failure in her driving-test. That leaves Sally, a non-smoking, vegetarian school-teacher from Ladbroke Grove, the most "aware" feminist of the three. So she advertises for a like-minded, female co-driver. Sally's attributes serve a purpose. The opening episodes of *Loose Connections*, which are set in London, cover the kind of well-marked territory that television drama has annexed for itself; there are many points of contemporary reference and even the old kitchen-sink appears less a squalid habitat than a challenge to the consumer society. Against this background the dramatic convention is that someone in the cast will have for our attention and the privilege of a close-up. Here that person is Sally. She demonstrates her staying-power and her right to a fuller portrayal in a series of situations.

The only reply to her advertisement is signed Harry Hammell. Gauche, gay, and doing an Open University course to better his lot in life, Harry can muster these assets against the dis-

The surest way to make an impact with a first novel, if not the most satisfactory, is to deal in extremes of oddity and unpleasantness: so, in *The Wasp Factory*, we have some ghoulish frivolity and a good deal of preposterous sadism. Frank Cauldham, a lunatic teenager, lives with his peculiar father on a Scottish island and spends his time performing atrocious rituals involving the separated heads and bodies of various illaquaque animals. In the opening chapter it becomes known that Frank's older half-brother, insane Eric, whose speciality is setting fire to dogs, has escaped from an asylum and is proceeding in his demented way towards the family home. As Eric gets closer to the island, certain striking facts about the obnoxious little family are set out for the benefit of the reader.

Eric's madness is presented with all the finesse of a strip cartoon — "I'm doing fine. I eat dogs. Heh heh heh!" — while the incident that sparked it off, a nasty sight in a hospital ward, is disclosed in a way that shows the author's flair for hammed-up horror. Frank, we learn, has a series of childhood murders to his credit, reminiscent of Edward Gorey in their winsome fiendishness — there's beasty Blythe, dispatched by a snake, small Paul, persuaded to whack an unexploded bomb with a piece of driftwood, and endearing Esmerelda, entangled in a kite and carried off. "She sailed over the sands and rocks and out towards the sea . . .".

As these episodes indicate, there is more than a touch of *Cold Comfort Farm* about the Cauldhams; but unfortunately the novelist's satiric intention is overwhelmed by his relish for exorbitant brutalities. In *The Wasp Factory*, we have a literary equivalent of the nastiest brand of juvenile delinquency: inflicting outrages on animals.

plaints but in different languages. Namita Gokhale feeds off the subtlety available to her in the country where language and idiom constantly redefine and rearrange each other. She speaks of Panjabi Oxford, Oxford Panjabi, chaste hindustani, Mensahib hindi, and she writes in a further range of dialects with which the British reader will feel quite at home. For the most part she handles this orchestra of voices adroitly, only rarely betrayed into becoming the melodrama she describes.

If Priya's cool narrative has a limitation it is that it copes more comfortably with other people's disarray than with her own pain. The book in funny and acute; an accomplished beginning.

advantage of being the wrong sex. He tells Sally that his special subject and reason for visiting Germany is Ludwig's Schlosses. ("There's something about Ludwig that just fired my imagination.") Not without a few doubts, Sally takes him on board for the journey. Away from the tritely familiar landscape of London, where people are bludgeoned out of shape, the flow improves vastly as the story moves abroad. Most of the scenery is convincingly drab, its foreignness an anticlimax and a source of vague nausea. Harry's social inferiority-complex is balanced by Sally's personal unsureness. They have a number of small-scale disasters and misunderstandings, not to speak of the openly declared warfare that breaks out. Despite, or, more likely, because of these problems, they move closer towards each other.

Through that very incongruous relationship of clumsy tenderness mixed with exasperation Maggie Brooks constructs dialogue which can be both funny and sober. The adventures have a defiantly screwball side, with man and woman each appearing ridiculous in turns. No happy, victorious finale for womanhood is pre-ordained; the story is not dictated crudely by feminist partisanship. Sally's progress, in this, like the author's first novel, does begin to show a way, though. The achievement of the book rests on how Sally becomes better educated and how the old battle-lines in the war between the sexes don't necessarily hold.

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